

## Military threat

U.S. intelligence officials say Russia is planning Ukraine invasion. **News, Page 4**

## Huskies defeat Pirates

UConn women take down Seton Hall 74-49 in Big East opener. **Sports, Page 1**

## Sanogo to miss 3 weeks

UConn sophomore forward out at least three weeks with abdominal strain. **Sports, Page 1**

## Partly sunny

Chance for a sprinkle or a flurry; high of 44. **Sports, Page 8**

# Hartford Courant



VOLUME CLXXXV

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# Inquiry into hiring underway

Former US attorney to investigate top prosecutor giving job to Lamont administration official's daughter

By Mark Pazniokas  
CT Mirror

The administration of Gov. Ned Lamont has retained former U.S. Attorney Stanley A. Twardy Jr. and two other lawyers from the firm of Day Pitney to investigate "possible improprieties by state employees and possibly others."

Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo Jr. said Thursday a focus

of the inquiry is the circumstances surrounding his hiring of Anastasia Diamantis, the daughter of Kostantinos "Kosta" Diamantis, one of the budget officials whom Colangelo had been lobbying for help in securing raises, recently obtained emails show.

Colangelo said he and the Division of Criminal Justice welcome the inquiry.

"There was never any impropri-

ety in the hiring of Miss Diamantis or any of my executive assistants, and the division is eager to see the matter resolved," Colangelo said.

Questions were first raised about her hiring in a column published Oct. 1 by the Hartford Courant.

Kosta Diamantis simultaneously was deputy secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, an unclassified political position, and the director of the Office of School

Construction Grants and Review, a classified job with civil service protections.

On Oct. 28, Diamantis was removed from the OPM position by the governor's office and suspended with pay from the school construction post. Rather than accept the suspension, Diamantis retired.

Emails obtained by the CT Mirror under the Freedom of

Information Act show that Anastasia Diamantis was hired as Colangelo unsuccessfully pressed state officials, including Diamantis, for help securing raises for prosecutors to address what he called long-standing disparities compared to public defenders and others.

They also show that Anastasia Diamantis, a state employee since

*Turn to Hiring, Page 2*



The 22-story Hilton Hotel in downtown Hartford, right, is facing closure and could be partly converted to 147 apartments under a proposal to keep some hotel rooms open. MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT



## Parents charged in school shooting

Prosecutor: Couple dismissed their son's behavior, armed him

By Corey Williams  
and Ed White  
Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. — A prosecutor filed involuntary manslaughter charges Friday against the parents of a teen accused of killing four students at a Michigan high school, saying they failed to intervene on the day of the tragedy despite being confronted with a drawing and chilling message — "blood everywhere" — that was found at the boy's desk.

James and Jennifer Crumbley committed "egregious" acts, from buying a gun on Black Friday and making it available to Ethan Crumbley to resisting his removal from school when they were summoned a few hours before the shooting, Oakland County prosecutor Karen McDonald said.

"I expect parents and everyone to have humanity and to step in and stop a potential tragedy," she said. "The conclusion I draw is that there was absolute reason to believe this individual was dangerous and disturbed."

By midafternoon, authorities said they were searching for the couple. Sheriff Mike Bouchard said their attorney, Shannon Smith, had agreed to arrange their arrest if charges were filed but hadn't been able to reach them.

Smith, however, said the Crumbleys weren't on the run and had left town earlier in the week "for their own safety."

"They are returning to the area to be arraigned," Smith told The Associated Press.

Earlier, the prosecutor offered the most precise account so far of the events that led to the shooting, three days after four students

# Downtown Hilton could become apartments site

Proposal would convert top floors of struggling hotel that faces closure

By Kenneth R. Gosselin  
Hartford Courant

**D**owntown Hartford's long-struggling Hilton Hotel — further battered by the loss of bookings in the pandemic and now facing closure — could be partially converted into nearly 150 apartments on the upper floors in a \$29 million proposal that would keep a portion of the 22-story building as a hotel.

The aging hotel on Trumbull Street would be renovated and rebranded as a DoubleTree Hotel, also a Hilton brand, by its current owner, Waterford Group, which has been unsuccessful in selling the hotel in the past year. The proposal calls for the number of hotel rooms to be cut by more than half, from 393 to 166, all located on the lower floors.

Waterford would partner with Randy Salvatore, the developer of the \$200 million-plus North Crossing mixed-use project around nearby Dunkin' Donuts Park, in converting the upper floors to apartments. Salvatore also renovated and now operates the Goodwin Hotel on Asylum Street.

The complex proposal, still in the early stages, seeks to avert a shutdown of the hotel and job loss, the loss of hundreds of hotel rooms critical to attracting events to city sports and entertainment venues, and prevent the possibility of a huge, empty building on a prominent downtown corner.

If closed, the hotel would likely revert back to the city. The city has loaned money to the hotel and it owns the land under the building.

*Turn to Hilton, Page 3*



*"I really did it because I've got such an investment right across the street from there, and Hartford — I really believe and I've always said — I'm bullish on it and it's on the upswing."*

*— Randy Salvatore, developer of mixed-use project around Dunkin' Donuts Park*

ing that's true," Lembo said in a statement Friday announcing his decision. "I've never been more certain that Connecticut's best days lie ahead, and I look forward to seeing them with my friends and neighbors in the best state in the nation."

Gov. Ned Lamont is expected to name a successor soon.

Lembo, 58, was first elected in 2010, and he was among the longest-serving statewide officials currently serving. The comptroller is Connecticut's chief fiscal watchdog, overseeing the state payroll and keeping a close eye on state employee benefits such as health care. He is the state's highest-ranking gay official.

*Turn to Lembo, Page 3*



Comptroller Kevin Lembo is stepping down at year's end due to health concerns after his medical team advised him to stop working. **CT.GOV**

## Weekly positivity rate in state highest since mid-January

The state's weekly COVID-19 test positivity rate surpassed 5% on Friday, reaching its highest point since mid-January. Connecticut's COVID-19 metrics have spiked significantly in recent weeks, with hospitalizations more than doubling in less than a month.

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## FROM PAGE ONE

### Hiring

from Page 1

2015, had a part-time job with a school construction management company for several years. She kept the job for at least 14 months after starting on July 3, 2020, as a \$99,000-a-year executive assistant in Colangelo's office.

When Colangelo hired her, she had been employed for nearly five years at the Department of Rehabilitation Services, first as an executive secretary to the commissioner and then as a disability claims examiner assistant. She has a master's degree in elementary education from Fairfield University and a bachelor of science degree in psychology from Sacred Heart University.

The emails obtained by CT Mirror provide previously unreported details about Colangelo's lobbying for raises and Anastasia Diamantis' second job with the construction company, Construction Advocacy Professionals, which represents owners in overseeing construction.

Colangelo said his hiring of Anastasia Diamantis posed no conflict, nor should it create the appearance of one, because the Department of Administrative Services is the authority for establishing compensation plans for the Division of Criminal Justice, not OPM.

"I did not have any concern about that," he said.

Still, it was Kosta Diamantis who informed him in writing on May 21, 2020, shortly before his daughter applied for the criminal justice job, that due to fiscal constraints, the OPM could not support his request. Colangelo continued to make his case for the raises to Diamantis and OPM Secretary Melissa McCaw after Anastasia Diamantis started work for him in July 2020.

In an email on Aug. 31, 2020, he told Kosta that the pay scale was depressing the number of applications for state's attorney. There were only five for openings in the Hartford and Stamford-Norwalk judicial districts.

"Kosta, Here are the number of applicants that we have had. We really need to correct the not moving from 35 to 40 hours for this group," Colangelo wrote. "You can see how it has hurt the number of applicants. I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss this with you."



Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo Jr. said a focus of the inquiry is the circumstances surrounding his hiring of Anastasia Diamantis, the daughter of Kostantinos "Kosta" Diamantis, one of the budget officials whom Colangelo had been lobbying for help in securing raises, recently obtained emails show. **TYLER SIZEMORE/AP**

### Administration silent on scope of inquiry

It is unclear if Twardy's inquiry reaches beyond Diamantis' hiring by Colangelo.

The state's contract with Twardy, which was signed Nov. 15, offers scant detail about the scope of work: "The contractor will serve as outside legal counsel to conduct a factual investigation on behalf of the Office of the Governor regarding possible improprieties by state employees and possibly others, and, as requested, to provide legal analysis and recommendations for possible further actions."

The contract was capped at \$75,000 and anticipated Twardy conducting 12 to 15 interviews, without identifying the subjects, though it referenced directions to come: "A more detailed description of the services will be provided in a 'Statement of Work' to be provided separately."

The Lamont administration declined to provide the statement of work, citing attorney-client privilege, or discuss the inquiry in any detail.

Kosta Diamantis, a former Democratic state representative from Bristol who was hired for the school construction job in 2015 and took on the additional OPM job in 2019, said Thursday he believed the paper trail of emails and other documents showed there was no undue influence in the hiring of his daughter.

He offered no opinion of who might be interviewed.

"I haven't the foggiest idea why they would waste that much time and energy when the emails speak

for themselves," Diamantis said. "My question in rebuttal would be, 'What is in the emails that suggest I did anything improper? Which I did not. And so my next part of that is, so if it's not improper, then they want to dig further to ask questions, so that they can find something improper?'

He has retained a lawyer, Norm Patti, who could not be reached for comment.

Diamantis exited state service with a scorching assessment of the governor's senior staff, and the governor's office indicated that retaining outside counsel was intended to show impartiality.

"Independent counsel was retained in order to ensure a complete and thorough review, free of any potential claim of partiality," Max Reiss, the governor's communication director, said in an emailed statement. "This independent inquiry is ongoing. The Office of the Governor will not have further comment as this is an ongoing review."

In an interview with the CT Mirror on the night he retired, Diamantis criticized the governor's top aides: Paul Mounds, the chief of staff; Josh Geballe, the chief operating officer; and Nora Dannehy, the general counsel. He complained they disrespected McCaw, the OPM secretary.

Twardy's contract was signed by Attorney General William Tong, not Dannehy or anyone else in the governor's office. Dannehy, however, is listed as the contact for the office of the governor.

Twardy also was the chief of staff to former Gov. Lowell P. Weicker Jr., who served from 1991 to 1995.

"I welcome any review of the hiring process because I know the outcome will allow us to move on and continue our focus on the very important work that the division does every day to serve the citizens of Connecticut," said Colangelo, who oversees a division that employs more than 500 people.

OPM, where Diamantis was influential, had no authority to either create the executive assistant position given to his daughter, nor could it unilaterally address Colangelo's complaint that the salaries of prosecutors were not changed when the state shifted them from a 35-hour to 40-hour work week decades ago, Colangelo said.

The commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services and McCaw, the secretary of OPM, would have to sign off. But OPM is seen as a place where hiring, the domain of DAS, can be slowed, especially in times of fiscal difficulties.

Colangelo said OPM played no role in authorizing the executive assistant position that went to Anastasia Diamantis.

"The executive assistant positions were created through DAS with the Division of Criminal Justice," said Colangelo, who took over leadership of the division in January. "They were effective on March 13, 2020. They were created way before I even met Anastasia."

She emailed her resume to Colangelo on June 9, 2020. She referenced a previous conversation, saying, "Attached please find my resume, per your request."

About two weeks earlier, it was her father who gave Colangelo bad news about the compensation plan.

"OPM currently estimates a General Fund deficit of \$620 million in FY 2020, \$2.4 billion in FY 2021, and likely more than \$3 billion in FY 2022, based on current consensus estimate of the long-term effects of the pandemic on the state's economy and revenues," Diamantis wrote Colangelo on May 21. "We are, therefore, unable to pursue your request for increased compensation, at this time."

In an interview Thursday, Colangelo said the paucity of applicants to his office has worsened.

"This became critical for me when we were filling the New London state's attorney position," he said. The division received three applications, only two from candidates who met the qualifications.

Colangelo said he would continue to seek higher compensation for prosecutors.

### A part-time job in school construction

Colangelo said he was aware of Anastasia Diamantis' part-time job with the construction management company and that outside employment is permitted.

Antonietta DiBenedetto-Roy, the owner of the construction management company, said Diamantis had worked for her on projects in Rhode Island, in part to avoid any potential conflict with her father's role in overseeing construction grants. Emails show, however, that at least on a few occasions, the younger Diamantis helped the company with documentation on a Connecticut project.

Diamantis is no longer employed by DiBenedetto-Roy, but she declined to say when Diamantis left.

Anastasia Diamantis did not respond to requests for comment.

Some of Diamantis' private-job emails became state records because they were copied to her state email address. The last email she sent on behalf of Construction Advocacy Professionals was dated Sept. 17, 2021, and related to a list of Rhode Island school and finance contacts she assembled for the company.

But Anastasia Diamantis was copied on an exchange of emails between her father and DiBenedetto-Roy regarding state documentation on the Birch Grove Primary School project in Tolland in July 2019, a project fast-tracked to replace a school with a crumbling foundation undermined by pyrrhotite, a mineral that expands when exposed to moisture. Her father said he could not recall why he copied her.

She also twice exchanged emails with DiBenedetto on the Tolland project in September 2020, each time during the state work day.

On Friday, September 4, 2020, DiBenedetto asked her to prepare a spreadsheet listing the subcontractors of the Tolland school's general contractor, D'Amato Construction of Bristol. Diamantis sent her the material at 3:23 p.m. the following Tuesday. Two weeks later, Diamantis answered another email about documentation on the Tolland project.

"It might have been something she was just helping me with, filing of documentation," DiBenedetto-Roy said. "Because she was strictly working for me in Rhode Island."

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### LOTTERY

Friday, Dec. 3

### PLAY3 DAY

4 1 1 WB: 2

### PLAY4 DAY

2 5 9 5 WB: 8

The late lotto numbers were not drawn in time for this edition. For results, please visit courant.com/lottery.

### THURSDAY'S LATE NUMBERS

#### PLAY3 NIGHT

9 9 5 WB: 9

#### PLAY4 NIGHT

7 0 4 1 WB: 2

#### CASH 5

1 11 13 31 33

#### LUCKY FOR LIFE

8 23 29 34 48 LB: 1

Tuesday's est. Lotto jackpot: \$2.4 million

Tonight's est. Powerball jackpot:

\$278 million

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## FROM PAGE ONE

### Hilton

from Page 1

The plan will require a battery of approvals, including \$11 million in state taxpayer-backed loans from the Capital Region Development Authority. Funding those loans would need the approval of the State Bond Commission, which, under Gov. Ned Lamont, has become more choosy about projects.

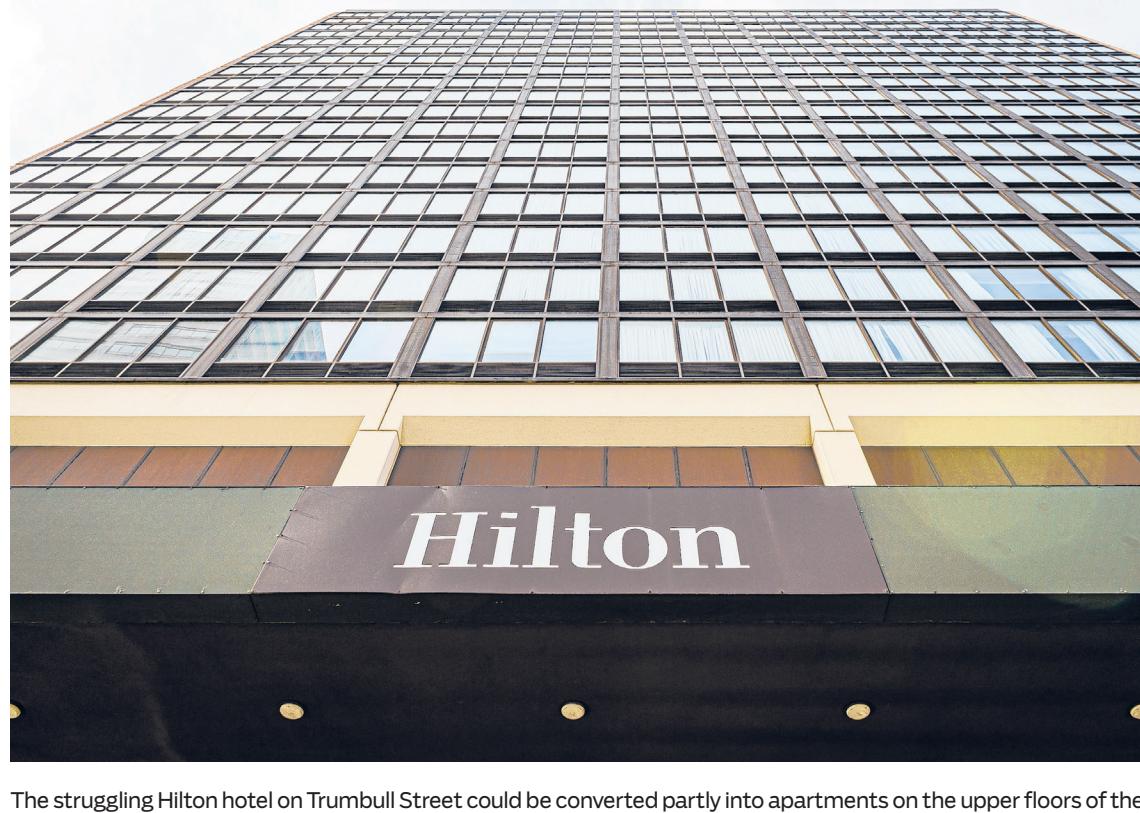
The proposal also would have to pass muster with the Hartford City Council because the city owns the land under the hotel, has a payment-in-lieu of taxes agreement and has loaned \$4.9 million in federal money to the building.

Salvatore said Friday that he had considered buying the hotel when Waterford put it up for sale, but initially passed on it. But when Waterford approached him early in the fall, he took another look and thought about what a closure might mean for his development around the ballpark, now in the first phase.

"I really did it because I've got such an investment right across the street from there, and Hartford — I really believe and I've always said — I'm bullish on it and it's on the upswing," Salvatore said. "The Hilton closing — that would be like GE when GE left Fairfield — it would be so detrimental to the city."

While some hotels have recovered from the pandemic as tourism picked up, hotels such as the Hilton also depend heavily on business travel are still struggling. Business travel has yet to recover in any significant way, and some experts say it might not ever return to levels prior to COVID-19.

About half of the \$11 million in funding from CRDA — \$6 million



The struggling Hilton hotel on Trumbull Street could be converted partly into apartments on the upper floors of the 22-story building. MARK MIRKO/HARTFORD COURANT

— is needed for the apartment conversion and won early backing Friday from the agency's housing committee. Funding for the hotel renovation, pegged at \$5.1 million, must be approved by a separate committee and both by CRDA's full board.

A possible closure of the hotel also raised alarms about the potential loss of more hotel rooms in the city. Hotel rooms are critical to booking events at both the convention center and the XL Center and foster economic development and vibrancy.

The city already has seen its stock of hotel rooms dwindle. The former Radisson on Morgan Street

is likely to be converted fully into apartments, its top floors already rentals. The Homewood Suites on Asylum Street closed early in pandemic and is being converted to rentals.

"Why is the Hilton critical to CRDA is pretty simple," Michael W. Freimuth, CRDA's executive director, said, at Friday's meeting. "The convention center's and the XL Center's success is based on a certain number of rooms that have to be in the market, and we are perilously close to losing that threshold."

Without plans to revive the building, Freimuth said it was likely the hotel would close in

the "very near term," its operations being heavily supported by a federal Paycheck Protection Program loans that were now running out. Public records show Waterford received \$3.6 million from the program for the Hilton.

Freimuth said it had been clear for some time that the building would have to undergo a significant renovation. The pandemic just pushed up the timing of making a decision, Freimuth said.

"This is a chance to reboot the property," Freimuth said. "I don't want to say, 'once and for all,' but for a while. Let's try to get a 20-year run out of it. It's an old property, and we've known this was coming

for several years. It's just been put on our desk a little quicker."

Under the proposal, about \$18 million would be earmarked for the apartment conversion, with Waterford splitting a \$2.5 million equity investment with Salvatore. The hotel upgrade would cost about \$11 million.

"Significant dollars are going to go in," Len Wolman, Waterford's chairman and chief executive, said Friday. "To really bring this hotel current and competitive and relevant with a new flag going on it."

Wolman said the plan would allow the Hilton to continue to operate, and a new contract would be negotiated with the unionized hotel workers. Waterford explored every option, including an auction, but splitting the use of the building — not unknown elsewhere in the country — appeared as the only viable alternative, Wolman said.

"I'm feeling optimistic, but cautiously so because there are a lot of moving pieces," Wolman said. "It's really going to take everyone's commitment and cooperation to get this thing done."

Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin said Friday it has become clear the Hilton cannot survive solely as a hotel.

"We have to make sure this building, which requires substantial investment, does not become a vacant and ultimately, blighted eyesore in the middle of downtown," Bronin said. "Instead, we have to be clear-eyed about the choices and the options, and this is the only deal that is available to us to preserve hotel rooms and continue Hartford's residential growth and to prevent a whole lot of worse outcomes."

*Kenneth R. Gosselin can be reached at kgosselin@courant.com.*

### Shooting

from Page 1

were killed and others were wounded at Oxford High School, roughly 30 miles north of Detroit.

Ethan Crumbley, 15, emerged from a bathroom with a gun, shooting students in the hallway, investigators said.

He's charged as an adult with murder, terrorism and other crimes in the deaths of Tate Myre, 16; Madisyn Baldwin, 17; Justin Shilling, 17; and Hana St. Julian, 14. Seven other people were wounded.

Law enforcement officials say the gunman fired more than 30 rounds before he was apprehended.

A lawyer for Ethan Crumbley pleaded not guilty on his behalf this week.

Under Michigan law, the involuntary manslaughter charge filed against the parents can be pursued if authorities believe someone contributed to a situation where there was a high chance of harm or death.

Parents in the U.S. are rarely charged in school shootings involving their children, even as most minors get guns from a parent or relative's house, according to experts.

School officials became concerned about the younger Crumbley on Monday, a day before the shooting, when a teacher saw him searching for ammunition on his phone, McDonald said.

Jennifer Crumbley was



People attending a vigil embrace at LakePoint Community Church in Oxford, Michigan, on Tuesday. Authorities say Ethan Crumbley, a 15-year-old sophomore, opened fire at Oxford High School, killing several students and wounding multiple other people, including a teacher. PAUL SANCYA/AP

contacted and subsequently told her son in a text message: "Lol. I'm not mad at you. You have to learn not to get caught," according to the prosecutor.

On Tuesday, a teacher found a note on Ethan's desk and took a photo. It was a drawing of a gun pointing at the words, "The thoughts won't stop. Help me," McDonald said.

There also was a drawing of a bullet, she said, with words above it: "Blood everywhere."

Between the gun and the bullet was a person who appeared to have been shot twice and is bleeding. He also wrote, "My life is useless" and "The world is dead," according to the prosecutor.

The school quickly had a meeting with Ethan and his parents,

who were told to get him into counseling within 48 hours, McDonald said.

The Crumbleys failed to ask their son about the gun or check his backpack and "resisted the idea of their son leaving the school at that time," McDonald said.

Instead, the teen returned to class and the shooting subsequently occurred.

"The notion that a parent could read those words and also know that their son had access to a deadly weapon that they gave him is unconscionable — it's criminal," the prosecutor said.

Jennifer Crumbley texted her son after the shooting, saying, "Ethan, don't do it," McDonald said.

James Crumbley called 911 to say that a gun was missing from their home and that Ethan might be the shooter. The gun had been kept in an unlocked drawer in the parents' bedroom, McDonald said.

Ethan accompanied his father for the gun purchase on Nov. 26 and posted photos of the firearm on social media, saying, "Just got my new beauty today," McDonald said.

Over the long Thanksgiving weekend, Jennifer Crumbley wrote on social media that it is a "mom and son day testing out his new Christmas present," the prosecutor said.

In a video message to the community Thursday, the head of Oxford Community Schools acknowledged the meeting of Crumbley, the parents and school officials. Superintendent Tim Throne offered no details but summed it up by saying, "No discipline was warranted."

McDonald was asked about the decision to keep Crumbley in school.

"Of course, he shouldn't have gone back to that classroom. ... I believe that is a universal position. I'm not going to chastise or attack, but yeah," she said.

### Lembo

from Page 1

Lembo initiated a number of nationally recognized health care reforms that improved patient outcomes and saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. His proposal to grow the state's reserves have helped grow the Rainy Day Fund and the elimination of billions in pension debt. As the former health care advocate, he has long championed health care reform and efforts to lower prescription drug costs.

He has also been a strong advocate of open government, launching websites that have positioned the state as a national leader in financial transparency.

Lembo was dealt high-profile setbacks in enacting legislation to expand state government's role in health insurance. He clashed repeatedly — and unsuccessfully — with the insurance industry and other business interests who blocked attempts by him and legislative Democrats to establish a so-called public option that would have created a state-sponsored insurance plan for small businesses

and nonprofits.

The final blow was delivered in May by Lamont, a fellow Democrat who opposed the public option. The measure was dropped weeks before this year's legislative session ended.

Lembo's stewardship of the office won praise from state lawmakers and the highest-level officials who were saddened by his surprise resignation, including Lembo, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, and U.S. Reps. Rosa DeLauro and John B. Larson.

Over the last decade, Kevin has transformed that office and thanks to his leadership we now have better government transparency, better health care and a more stable budget," said Rep. Sean Scanlon, a Democrat from Guilford. "As his friend, I will deeply miss working with him but I'm happy that he's prioritizing his health after prioritizing the health of all of Connecticut as a health care advocate for such a long time."

House Speaker Matt Ritter, a Democrat from Hartford, said Lembo was an early voice for fiscal prudence regarding the state's need to fund its pension obliga-

tions.

"He was one of the first to continue to remind us of that," Ritter said. "Every year [since Lembo took office], we have paid 100% at minimum of our pension payment. ... If you go back 30, 40 years that was far from the case and that fiscal discipline will be a legacy of his."

Martin Looney, Senate President Pro Tem, said Lembo has a long record of supporting progressive proposals. "He's had a superb and extraordinary 11 years advocating for enlightened policy in the health care and insurance areas," Looney said. "I'm hoping when his health issues are resolved, he'll be able to return [to public life]."

Lembo had been widely mentioned as a possible contender for governor in 2018. Known as a policy wonk, he gained a reputation for being highly skilled in complicated financial matters. The married father of three has embraced his reputation as a fiscal nerd; at one point, his campaign logo featured a pair of clunky black spectacles.

In 2016, Lembo, who sits on the 10-member State Bond Commis-

sion, joined Republicans in criti-

cizing a controversial plan to offer up to \$22 million in state loans and grants to the world's largest hedge fund, Westport-based Bridgewater Associates, headed by Greenwich billionaire Ray Dalio. That stance put Lembo directly at odds with the economic agenda of then-Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, a fellow Demo-

crat.

At the time, Lembo characterized his vote not as a gesture of protest but rather a real acknowledgment of Connecticut's painful fiscal realities at a time of layoffs.

"We have to be willing to say 'no' to the CEO of a large company with the same ease that we say 'no' to the mom of a disabled child," he said then. "In no way was this symbolic. It is about a difference of opinion on what our new economic reality demands."

State Attorney General William Tong, a fellow constitutional officer, said, "Kevin Lembo is one of the most knowledgeable and dedicated policy wonks and leaders I have had the honor to serve with. His fight for transparency and open government has made us all better public servants, and our state government is stronger

because of him."

"I can only imagine how difficult it is for Kevin to make the decision to step down from a position that he loves and that he energetically campaigned to fill," Lamont said. "Throughout his entire public life, Kevin has dedicated himself to looking out for others, and in his time as comptroller, he has been committed to righting the fiscal ship of Connecticut and fighting to implement policies that tame the state's revenue volatility and bring financial stability. ... Kevin refers to himself as a nerd, and sometimes a nerd is exactly what you need."

Under state statutes Lamont can name a successor if the legislature is not in session. Lamont said Friday that he would name a successor soon, and then an election would be held for the open seat in November 2022.

*Courant staff writer Stephen Singer contributed to this report.*

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# WORLD & NATION

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## In S. Africa's plight, a peek at future

Threats abound as omicron rises there and delta still rages

By Andrew Meldrum

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — Dr. Sikhulile Moyo was analyzing COVID-19 samples in his lab in Botswana last week when he noticed they looked startlingly different from others.

Within days, the world was ablaze with the news that the coronavirus had a new variant of concern — one that appears to be driving a dramatic surge in South Africa and offering a glimpse of where the pandemic might be headed.

New COVID-19 cases in South Africa have jumped from about 200 a day in mid-November to more than 16,000 on Friday. Omicron was detected over a week ago in the country's most populous province, Gauteng, and has since spread to all eight other provinces, Health Minister Joe Phahala said.

Even with the rapid increase, infections are still below the 25,000 new daily cases that South Africa reported in the previous surge, in June and July.

Little is known about the new variant, but the spike in South Africa suggests it might be more contagious, said Moyo, the scientist who may have been the first to identify the new variant, though researchers in neighboring South Africa were close on his heels.

Omicron has more than 50 mutations, and scientists have called it a big jump in the evolution of the virus.

It's not clear if the variant causes more serious illness



An Orange Farm, South Africa, resident listens to a nurse after receiving his COVID-19 vaccine Friday. JEROME DELAY/AP

or can evade the protection of vaccines.

Phahala noted that only a small number of people who have been vaccinated have gotten sick, mostly with mild cases, while the vast majority of those who have been hospitalized were not vaccinated.

But in a worrisome development, South African scientists reported that omicron appears more likely than earlier variants to cause reinfections among people who have already had a bout with COVID-19.

"Previous infection used to protect against delta, and now with omicron it doesn't seem to be the case," one of

the researchers, Anne von Gottberg of the University of Witwatersrand, said at a World Health Organization briefing on Thursday.

While the study did not examine the protection offered by vaccination, von Gottberg said: "We believe that vaccines will still, however, protect against severe disease."

The findings, posted online Thursday, are preliminary and haven't yet undergone scientific review.

While all eyes are on the omicron variant that is popping up, the delta form of the coronavirus isn't finished wreaking havoc in the U.S., swamping hospi-

tals with record numbers of patients in the Midwest and New England.

"Omicron is a spark that's on the horizon. Delta variant is the fire that's here today," said Dr. Nirav Shah, director of the state Center for Disease Control and Prevention in Maine, where an unprecedented 334 people were in the hospital with COVID-19 as of midweek.

The U.S. recorded its first confirmed omicron infection on Wednesday, in a Californian who had been to South Africa. Several more cases were reported Thursday in the New York City area, Minnesota, Hawaii

and Colorado under circumstances suggesting the variant has begun spreading within the U.S.

On Friday, more states reported confirmed omicron cases including Pennsylvania, Maryland and Nebraska.

For now, the extra-contagious delta variant accounts for practically all cases in the U.S. and continues to inflict misery at a time when many hospitals are struggling with nurse shortages and a backlog of patients undergoing procedures that had been put off early in the pandemic.

The fear is that omicron will foist even more patients, and perhaps sicker ones,

onto hospitals.

In Minnesota, which ranks third in new cases per capita, the Pentagon sent medical teams last month to two major hospitals to relieve doctors and nurses, and another team was scheduled to arrive Friday.

"This fourth wave, I can pretty clearly state, has hit Minnesota harder than any of the previous ones," said Dr. Timothy Johnson, president of the Minnesota chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians.

He said hospitals are struggling because of a combination of a lack of nurses, fatigue and patients undergoing treatments that had to be postponed earlier in the crisis. "Now those chickens are coming home to roost a little bit," he said.

Two years into the outbreak, COVID-19 has killed over 780,000 Americans, and deaths are running at about 900 per day.

COVID-19 cases and deaths in the U.S. have dropped by about half since the delta peak in August and September, but at about 86,000 new infections per day, the numbers are still high, especially heading into the holidays, when people travel and gather with family.

With the onset of cold weather sending more people indoors, hospitals are feeling the strain.

"Delta is not subsiding," said Dr. Andre Kalil, an infectious-disease physician at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Nebraska on Tuesday reported 555 people in the hospital with COVID-19 the highest number since last December, when the vaccine rollout was just beginning.

## US intel says Russia now planning Ukraine gambit

As troops mass on border, Biden warns Putin against action

By Aamer Madhani, Nomaan Merchant and Vladimir Isachenkov  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence officials have determined that Russian planning is underway for a possible military offensive against Ukraine that could begin as soon as early 2022 and would include an estimated 175,000 personnel, according to an administration official.

The new intelligence finding estimates that half of the Russian personnel are already deployed along various points near Ukraine's border, according to a Biden administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the finding.

It comes as Russia has picked up its demands on President Joe Biden to guarantee that Ukraine will not be allowed to join the NATO alliance.

The official added that the plans call for the movement of 100 battalion tactical groups along with armor, artillery, and equipment.

Intelligence officials

also have seen an uptick in Russian information operations' use of proxies and media outlets to denigrate Ukraine and NATO ahead of a potential invasion, the official said.

The intelligence findings were first reported by The Washington Post.

Earlier Friday, Biden pledged to make it "very, very difficult" for Russia's Vladimir Putin to take military action in Ukraine and said new initiatives coming from his administration are intended to deter Russian aggression.

The president offered the measured warning to Putin in response to growing concern about a Russian buildup of troops on the Ukrainian border and increasingly bellicose rhetoric from the Kremlin.

"What I am doing is putting together what I believe to be will be the most comprehensive and meaningful set of initiatives to make it very, very difficult for Mr. Putin to go ahead and do what people are worried he may do," Biden told reporters.

The Kremlin said Friday that Putin would seek binding guarantees precluding NATO's expansion to Ukraine during the call with Biden, while the Ukrainian

defense minister warned that Russia could invade his country next month.

Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov told lawmakers Friday that the number of Russian troops near Ukraine and in Russian-annexed Crimea is estimated at 94,300, warning that a "large-scale escalation" is possible in January.

There are signs that the White House and Kremlin are close to arranging a conversation next week between Biden and Putin. Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov told reporters Friday that arrangements have been made for a Putin-Biden call in the coming days, adding that the date will be announced after Moscow and Washington finalize details.

The Russians say a date has been agreed upon, but declined to say when.

Biden and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy have also tentatively agreed to have a call next week, according to a person close to the Ukrainian president who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said administration officials have



Tentative arrangements have been made for a call between Russia's Vladimir Putin and President Joe Biden in the coming days. EVAN VUCCI/AP

"engaged in the possibility" of a Biden-Putin call. White House officials did not respond to a request for comment on the expected Zelenskyy call.

"It certainly would be an opportunity to discuss our serious concerns about the bellicose rhetoric, about the military buildup that we're seeing on the border of Ukraine," Psaki said of a potential Biden-Putin call.

Biden did not detail what actions he was weighing.

But Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who met Thursday with Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Sweden, said the U.S. has

threatened new sanctions. He did not detail the potential sanctions but suggested the effort would not be effective.

"If the new 'sanctions from hell' come, we will respond," Lavrov said. "We can't fail to respond."

Psaki said the administration would look to coordinate with European allies if it moved forward with sanctions. She noted that bitter memories of Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that had been under Ukraine's control since 1954, are front of mind as the White House considers

the way forward.

"We know what President Putin has done in the past," Psaki said. "We see that he is putting in place the capacity to take action in short order."

U.S.-Russia relations have been rocky since Biden took office.

In addition to the Ukraine issue, the Biden administration has levied sanctions against Russian targets and called out Putin on Kremlin interference in U.S. elections, malign cyberactivity against U.S. businesses, and the treatment of opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned last year and then later imprisoned.

## Biden signs stopgap funding bill to keep federal government running

By Kevin Freking and Lisa Mascaro  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Friday signed into law the stopgap spending bill that will keep the federal government running through Feb. 18, after congressional leaders defused a partisan stand-off over federal vaccine mandates.

The White House released a statement noting the bill signing and thank-

ing congressional leaders for their work. Earlier in the day, Biden said it was worth praising bipartisanship, but "funding the government isn't a great achievement, it's the bare minimum of what needs to get done."

Both chambers of Congress passed the legislation Thursday avoiding a short-term shutdown of the government into the weekend. The bill keeps the federal government running for 11 more weeks, generally at current spend-

ing levels, while adding \$7 billion to aid Afghanistan evacuees.

"I am glad that in the end, cooler heads prevailed. The government will stay open and I thank the members of this chamber for walking us back from the brink of an avoidable, needless and costly shutdown," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

The Senate approved the measure by a vote of 69-28. Nineteen Republican senators joined with Democrats

in voting for the measure.

The Democratic-led House passed the measure by a 221-212 vote. The Republican leadership urged members to vote no; the lone GOP vote for the bill came from Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger.

Lawmakers bemoaned the short-term fix and blamed the opposing party for the lack of progress on this year's spending bills. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, chair of the House Appropriations Committee, said the

measure would, however, allow for negotiations on a package covering the full budget year through September.

Some Republicans opposed to Biden's vaccine rules wanted Congress to take a hard stand against the mandated shots for workers at larger businesses, even if that meant shutting down federal offices over the weekend by refusing to expedite a final vote on the spending bill.

Polling from Associated

Press shows Americans are divided over Biden's effort to vaccinate workers, which includes an option to undergo weekly testing, with Democrats overwhelmingly for it while most Republicans are against.

Separately, some health care providers protested the stopgap spending measure. Hospitals say it does nothing to shield them from Medicare payment cuts scheduled to go into effect amid uncertainty about the new omicron variant.

## WORLD & NATION

### NEWS BRIEFING

## Israeli firm's spyware reportedly used to hack State employees

From news services

**WASHINGTON** — The phones of 11 U.S. State Department employees were hacked with spyware from Israel's NSO Group, the world's most infamous hacker-for-hire company, a person familiar with the matter said Friday.

The employees were all located in Uganda and included some foreign service officers, said the person, who was not authorized to speak publicly about an ongoing investigation. Some local Ugandan employees of the department appear to have been among the 11 hacked, the person said.

The hacking is the first known instance of NSO Group's trademark Pegasus spyware being used against U.S. government personnel. It was not known what individual or entity used the NSO technology to hack into the accounts, or what information was sought.

"We have been acutely concerned that commercial spyware like NSO Group software poses a serious counterintelligence and security risk to U.S. personnel," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said at briefing Friday.

News of the hacks, which was first reported by Reuters, comes a month after the U.S. Commerce Department blacklisted NSO Group, barring U.S. technology from being used by the company. And Apple sued NSO Group last week seeking to effectively shut down its hacking of all iPhones and other Apple products, calling the Israeli company "amoral 21st century mercenaries."

The State Department employees were hacked on their iPhones, the person familiar with the matter said.

NSO Group said in a statement that after being asked Thursday about the Ugandan phones "we immediately shut down all the customers potentially relevant to this case," but did not say who the customers were. The company said its spying technology is blocked from hacking phones based in the U.S. and is only sold to licensed customers.

If the allegations turn out to be true "they are a blunt violation" of contract terms and NSO Group "will take legal action against these customers," it added.

**Taliban ban forced marriage:** The Taliban decreed on Friday they were banning forced marriage of women in Afghanistan, a move apparently meant to address criteria the international community consider

a precondition to recognizing their government and restoring aid to the war-torn country.

The move was announced by the reclusive Taliban chief, Hibatullah Akhundzada, a cleric chosen as the group's supreme leader who is believed to be in the southern city of Kandahar. It comes as poverty is surging in Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover in August amid the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops. Since then, foreign governments have halted funds that had been a mainstay of the economy.

"Both (women and men) should be equal," said the decree, adding that "no one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure."

Women's rights improved markedly over the past two decades of international presence in Afghanistan, but are seen as under threat with the return of the Taliban, who during their earlier rule in the 1990s virtually cloistered women, banned



**Abandoned cats** wander in search of food at a road covered by lava Friday at the exclusion zone near the volcano on the Canary island of La Palma, Spain. The volcano is going strong and seismic activity in the area has increased in recent days. **EMILIO MORENATTI/AP**

them from public life and access to education.

**Nobel winner cleared to travel:** The Court of Appeals in the Philippines said on Friday that it would allow the journalist Maria Ressa to travel to Norway to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, after the government tried to block her from attending the ceremony.

Ressa's lawyer, Ted Te, filed the appeal last month for his client after the Philippines' solicitor general said the journalist could not travel to Norway. The government called her a flight risk because her "recurring criticisms of the Philippine legal processes in the international community reveal her lack of respect for the judicial system."

Ressa was awarded the peace prize in October along with Dmitri Muratov, a Russian investigative journalist, for "their courageous fight for freedom of expression."

Ressa, the first Nobel laureate from the Philippines, is the chief executive officer of Rappler, a digital news organization that is well-known for its investigations on disinformation and of President Rodrigo Duterte's brutal five-year drug war.

**Iran nuclear talks:** Diplomats negotiating in Vienna to revive Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers have paused after five days of talks to consult with their governments and will reconvene next week, officials said Friday.

The European Union official chairing the meeting said there had been some progress, but further "convergence" was necessary.

"We have identified the challenges ahead. Now it is time to consult with capitals," EU diplomat Enrique Mora told reporters. "We will be resuming here in Vienna next week."

The so-called Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, has effectively been on life support since the United States pulled out under then-President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Tehran in 2018.

**France arms deal:** France announced multibillion-euro deals Friday to sell fighter planes and combat helicopters to the United Arab Emirates, aiming to boost military cooperation with its top ally in the Persian Gulf amid their shared concerns about Iran.

The UAE is buying 80 upgraded Rafale warplanes in a deal the French Defense Ministry said is worth 16 billion euros (\$18 billion) and represents the largest-ever French weapons contract for export. It also announced a deal with the UAE to sell 12 Airbus-built combat helicopters.

They offer a shot in the arm for France's defense

industry after the collapse of a \$66 billion contract for Australia to buy 12 French submarines that ultimately went to the U.S. But the deals faced criticism by human rights groups concerned about the UAE's involvement in the yearslong war in Yemen.

**Honda recalls:** Honda is recalling nearly 725,000 SUVs and pickup trucks because the hoods can open while the vehicles are moving.

The recall covers certain 2019 Passports, 2016 through 2019 Pilots and 2017 through 2020 Ridgeline pickups.

Honda says in documents posted Friday by U.S. safety regulators that the hood latch striker can become damaged and separate from the hood.

Dealers will either repair the striker or replace the hood if necessary at no cost to owners.

Honda will notify owners by letter starting Jan. 17.



Pope Francis greets a woman holding a child Friday after a prayer with migrants at the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Cross in Nicosia, Cyprus. **ANDREAS SOLARO/GTETTY-AFP**

## West's 'indifference' decried as Vatican takes in 12 migrants

By Menelaos Hadjicostis and Nicole Winfield  
Associated Press

**NICOSIA, Cyprus** — Pope Francis on Friday denounced the "culture of indifference" that the West shows migrants as the Vatican confirmed that at least a dozen asylum-seekers would be transferred from Cyprus to Italy in a gesture of solidarity with European countries that have received a disproportionate share of would-be refugees.

The transfer, formally announced on the second day of Francis' visit to Cyprus, came on the eve of his scheduled arrival in Greece, from where he brought a dozen Syrian Muslim refugees home with him aboard the papal plane in 2016.

The Vatican said the Rome-based Sant'Egidio Community, working with governments, had arranged to bring the asylum-seekers from Cyprus to Italy in the coming weeks. It said 12 people would be initially transferred. Earlier, the Cypriot Interior Ministry had thanked Francis and the Holy See for the initiative to relocate 50 people,

saying it was a recognition of Cyprus' inability to continue to absorb migrants and refugees.

The Vatican didn't immediately respond when asked about the discrepancy, though presumably more could be relocated at a later date since Sant'Egidio for years has run "humanitarian corridor" services to bring migrants to Italy legally.

Cyprus' interior minister, Nicos Nouris, insisted that arrangements had been made to transfer 50 asylum-seekers in total.

Francis himself didn't confirm the initiative during a Friday evening prayer service with migrants in the Church of the Holy Cross in Nicosia, the Mediterranean island nation's capital.

But he made it clear that countries had a moral obligation to accept those who flee war, hatred and oppression — often to face barbed wire at borders before they are rejected and returned.

"He who comes asking for freedom, bread, help, fraternity and joy, who is fleeing hatred, finds himself in front of a hatred which is

called barbed wire," Francis told the migrants, who took up most of the pews in the Nicosia church. "May the Lord awaken the conscience of all of us in front of all these things. We cannot be silent and look away at this culture of indifference."

Francis referred to the problems Cyprus was undergoing, saying he recognized that governments can't take in everyone and that "we have to understand the limits."

"This is a generous island, but it can't do everything because the number of people who arrive is superior to the possibility to insert, integrate and promote them," in Cypriot society, he said.

But he also voiced disgust at how the "developed civilizations of the West" refuse to accept migrants or send them back to countries where they would be "confined, tortured and enslaved."

It was a reference to the migrant crisis at the European Union's border in Poland with Belarus, as well as the conditions in Libyan compounds for refugees who are sent back.

## Mostly white jury seated for trial in Daunte Wright's death

By Steve Karnowski and Amy Forliti  
Associated Press

**MINNEAPOLIS** — A mostly white jury was seated Friday for the trial of a white suburban Minneapolis police officer who said she drew her handgun by mistake when she fatally shot Black motorist Daunte Wright following a traffic stop.

Nine of the first 12 jurors seated for Kim Potter's trial are white — roughly in line with the demographics of surrounding Hennepin County, but notably less diverse than the jury that convicted former Minneapolis Officer Derek Chauvin this spring in the death of George Floyd.

Potter, 49, is charged with first- and second-degree manslaughter in the April 11 shooting in the suburb of Brooklyn Center. Opening statements are scheduled for Wednesday.

Legal experts have said juries that are diverse by race, gender and economic background are necessary to minimize bias.

The Chauvin jury that was split 50-50 between whites and people of color was "mostly just luck of the draw," said Ted Sampsell-Jones, a professor at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul.

He said racial and ethnic diversity matters in terms of the perceived legitimacy of the jury, but attitudes about police and policing are much more important for the case outcome.

"It might be true in general that Black people are more distrustful of police than white people, but it isn't true as to every individual," Sampsell-Jones said. "Lots of young white people in Hennepin County are far more progressive and anti-cop than some older Black people, for example."

Alan Tuerkheimer, a Chicago-based jury consul-

tant, said even a single juror of color can be enough to change the dynamics of deliberations by bringing more depth and another viewpoint to the process.

Potter has said she meant to use her Taser on Wright after he tried to drive away from officers while they were trying to arrest him, but that she grabbed her handgun instead. Her body camera recorded the shooting.

Of the first 12 jurors seated — the ones who will deliberate if no alternates are needed — one juror identifies as Black and two as Asian. The panel is evenly split between men and women. The two alternates are also white.

The jury roughly matches the demographics of Hennepin County, which is about 74% white.

Attorneys and the judge spent considerable time probing potential jurors for their views of protests against police brutality.

Questionnaires asked about attitudes toward police, including whether officers should be second-guessed, whether they get the respect they deserve and whether jurors personally trust them.

Juror No. 11, for example, said she "somewhat agreed" that officers should not be

second-guessed.

"I think sometimes you just react, and sometimes it might be a wrong reaction, but, you know, mistakes happen," she said. "People make mistakes."

She was seated after saying she could set that view aside and consider evidence.

Several jurors strongly disagreed that it's unreasonable to question officers' actions. Juror No. 19, the only Black person on the jury, wondered how Potter could show such a "lapse in judgment" with her experience.

Potter, who resigned two days after Wright's death, has told the court she will testify. Body-camera video recorded the shooting, with Potter heard saying, "Taser, Taser, Taser" before she fired, followed by, "I grabbed the wrong (expletive) gun."

The most serious charge against Potter requires prosecutors to prove recklessness; the lesser only requires them to prove culpable negligence. Minnesota's sentencing guidelines call for a sentence of just over seven years on the first-degree manslaughter count and four years on the second-degree one. Prosecutors have said they would seek a longer sentence.

Alan Tuerkheimer, a Chicago-based jury consul-

**In this screen grab from video, Hennepin County Judge Regina Chu presides over jury selection Thursday in the trial of former police Officer Kim Potter in Minneapolis. COURTTV**

**Photo: AP**

# BUSINESS

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## US jobless rate sinks to a pandemic low of 4.2%

Hiring nevertheless slowed in November amid virus, inflation, labor and supply chain woes

**By Christopher Rugaber**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — America's unemployment rate tumbled last month to its lowest point since the pandemic struck, even as employers appeared to slow their hiring — a mixed picture that pointed to a resilient economy that's putting more people to work.

The government reported Friday that private businesses and other employers added just 210,000 jobs in November, the weakest monthly gain in nearly a year and less than half of October's gain of 546,000.

But other data from the Labor Department's report painted a much brighter picture. The unemployment rate plummeted from 4.6% to 4.2% as a substantial 1.1 million Americans said they found jobs last month.

The U.S. economy still remains under threat from a spike in inflation, shortages of labor and supplies and the potential impact of the omicron variant of the coronavirus. But for now, Americans are spending freely,

and the economy is forecast to expand at a 7% annual rate in the final three months of the year, a sharp rebound from the 2.1% pace in the previous quarter, when the delta variant hobbled growth.

Employers in some industries, such as restaurants, bars, and hotels, sharply slowed their hiring in November. By contrast, job growth remained solid in areas like transportation and warehousing, which are benefiting from the growth of online commerce.

The sharp drop in the unemployment rate was particularly encouraging because it coincided with an influx of a half-million job seekers into the labor force, most of whom quickly found work. Normally, many such people would take time to find jobs and would be counted as unemployed until they did. The influx of new job seekers, if it continues, would help reduce the labor shortages that have bedeviled many employers since the economy began to recover from the pandemic.

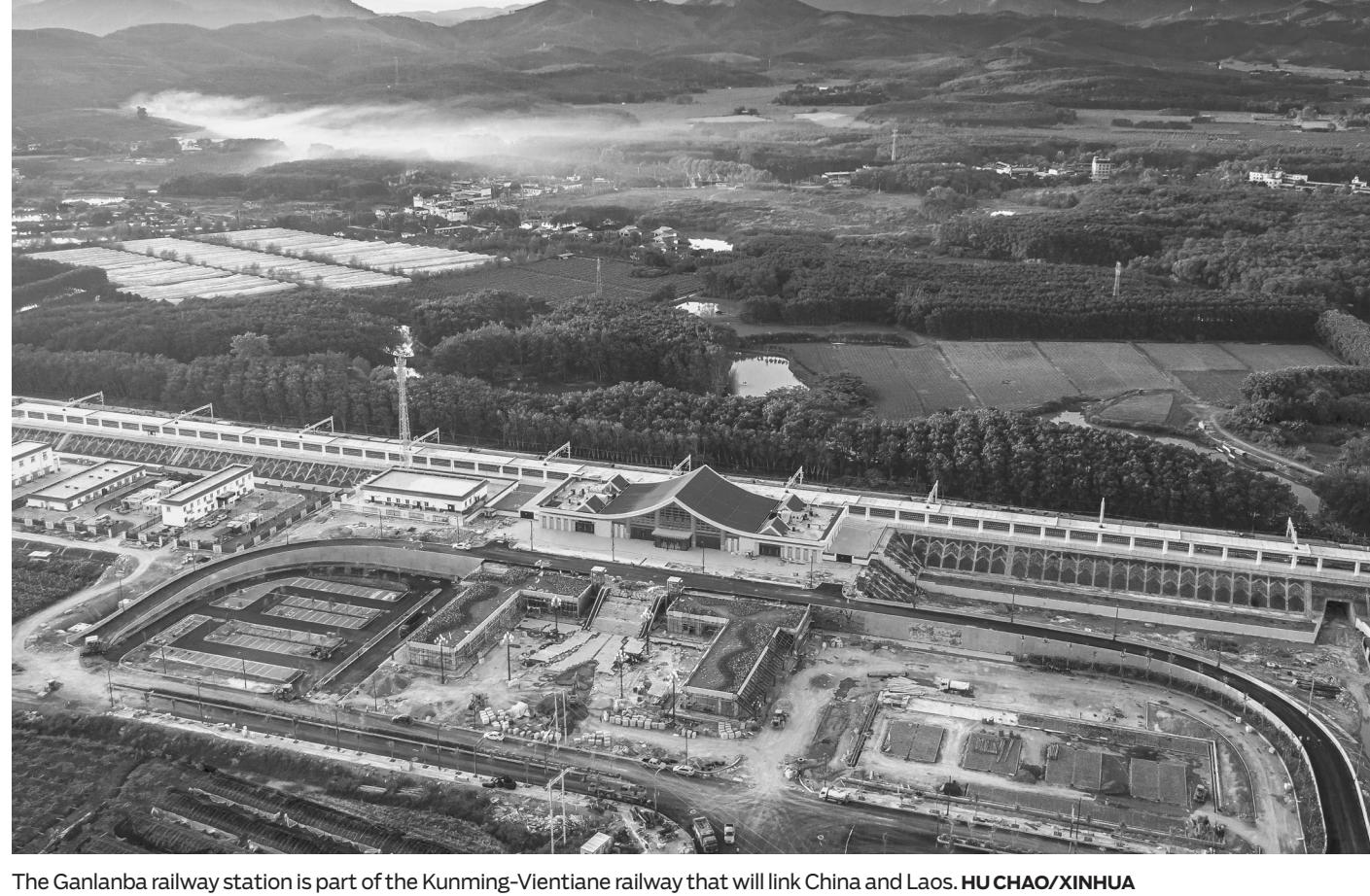
"That's good news for job seekers and workers, and for businesses too," said Julia

Pollak, chief economist at online jobs site ZipRecruiter. "It looks like the supply constraints are easing a bit with the unemployment rate low and wage growth high" — two factors that often encourage people to search for work.

For months, employers have been struggling with worker shortages because many people who lost jobs in the pandemic have not, for various reasons, returned to the workforce. But last month, nearly 600,000 people came off the sidelines to look for jobs and were generally hired quickly. The government classifies people as unemployed only if they're actively seeking work.

As a result, the proportion of Americans who are in the workforce rose from 61.6% to 61.8%, the first significant increase since April. If that much-anticipated development continues, it could point to stronger job growth ahead.

The jobs outlook for the coming months has become hazier with the emergence of the omicron variant though widespread business shutdowns are considered unlikely.



The Ganlanba railway station is part of the Kunming-Vientiane railway that will link China and Laos. HU CHAO/XINHUA

## Railway carries load of debt

Laos launching line financed by Chinese banks, but which country will benefit most?

**By Joe McDonald, Sam McNeil and Elaine Kurtenbach**

Associated Press

BEIJING — Laos, a nation of 7 million people wedged between China, Vietnam and Thailand, has launched a \$5.9 billion Chinese-built railway that links China's poor southwest to foreign markets but piles on potentially risky debt.

The line through lush tropical mountains from the Laotian capital, Vientiane, to Kunming is one of hundreds of projects under Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative to expand trade by building ports, railways and other facilities across Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

The 642-mile line opened Friday to cargo but no regular passengers due to anti-pandemic travel curbs.

Poor countries welcome China's initiative. But the projects are financed by loans from Chinese state-owned banks that must be repaid. Some borrowers complain Chinese-built projects are too expensive and leave too much debt.

The Kunming-Vientiane railway is a link in a possible future network to connect China with Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Malaysia and Singapore. That would give southern China more access to ports and export markets.

Laotian leaders hope the railway will energize their isolated economy by linking it to China and markets as far away as Europe. But foreign experts say the potential benefits to Laos beyond serving as a channel for Chinese trade are unclear and the cost appears dangerously high.

The railway will "generate very positive economic returns" for China and possibly other countries, but it is harder to see "exactly what the economic benefits are going to be" for Laos, said Scott Morris of the Center for Global Development in Washington.

With only 21 stations in Laos, the line is designed to serve Chinese needs to reach foreign ports quickly, Morris said. He said a railway to serve mostly rural Laos would have more stations to connect farmers to markets.

"This is essentially a Chinese public infrastructure project that happens to exist in another country," he said.

The Kunming-Vientiane railway's 260-mile segment in Laos will be operated

by the Laos-China Railway Co., a joint venture between China Railway group and two other Chinese government-owned companies with a 70% stake and a Laotian state company with 30%.

Borrowed money makes up 60% of the railway's investment, according to the two governments.

Such a debt load is unusually heavy and "repayment risk should be quite high," said Laura Li of S&P Global Ratings, a specialist in infrastructure financing.

Laos might be forced to take over repaying the joint venture's full \$3.5 billion debt to keep the line running if the company defaults and the Chinese partners choose not to put in more money, said Ammar Malik and Bradley Parks in a report for AidData, a research project at Virginia's College of William & Mary.

That is the equivalent of nearly a fifth of Laos's economic output last year.

The country's outstanding debt, much of it owed to Beijing, is equal to about two-thirds of annual economic output.

Laos has been one of the world's fastest-growing economies over the past decade but still is one of its poorest.

Its average economic output per person more than doubled since 2010 but stands at \$2,600.

## Didi leaves NYSE for Hong Kong market

**By Paul Mozur**

The New York Times

Didi Chuxing, the Chinese Uber-like ride-hailing champion and a company once considered the world's most successful startup, said Friday that it would begin delisting its New York-traded shares and prepare for a public offering in Hong Kong.

The move is sure to reverberate outside China, particularly in Washington and on Wall Street. Just in June, Didi sold shares to global investors in an initial public offering in New York that valued the company at \$69 billion. The abrupt turn after just six months is likely to anger investors, who bid up the price of the company this summer when it listed.

In a statement in China, Didi said its board had authorized beginning the process of delisting from the New York Stock Exchange. The securities that trade in the United States will be "convertible into freely tradable shares" of the company on another stock exchange, it said.

"The company will organize a shareholders' meeting to vote on the above matter at an appropriate time in the future, following necessary procedures," Didi said.

The shift comes as officials in the United States and China alike take an increasingly skeptical view of the access that Chinese companies have long enjoyed to Wall Street and its money.

Beijing's top leaders are also moving to assert greater control over Didi and the

private technology sector. While some analysts have applauded long-needed regulatory measures to control consumer data and end anti-competitive practices, others worry the moves may damage the competitiveness of the country's dynamic private technology giants.

Chinese officials have rushed to reassure investors about the importance of private industry, but China's efforts to tame its internet giants has already worried investors that a push for social control will only extend deeper into the economy.

At the same time, an antitrust campaign aimed at the technology industry has left untouched state-run monopolies that dominate key sectors like energy, telecommunications and banking.

## US service sector hit new heights last month

**By Martin Crutsinger**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Growth in the services sector, where most Americans work, hit an all-time high in November, overtaking a record that was set the previous month.

The Institute for Supply Management reported Friday that its monthly survey of service industries increased by 2.4 percentage points in November from the October record to a reading of 69.1 percent. Any reading above 50 indicates growth.

The service sector data are being released against the backdrop of an employment landscape in which hiring appeared to slow in November, but the unemployment rate tumbled from 4.6% to 4.2%. That is a historically low jobless rate though still above the pre-pandemic level of 3.5%.

Some of the strength in the services sector is coming from supply chain troubles that are making it harder to meet increased demand.

All 18 service sector industries reported growth in November and since recording two months of contraction last year in April and May when the pandemic was raging, the overall index has now grown for 18 consecutive months.

Anthony Nieves, head of the ISM services sector survey committee, said the responses for the November report were gathered before reports started coming out about the new omicron variant. He said while the new variant could affect service sector activity it will depend on how much the new variant increases infections.

The responses from service sector businesses showed that the supply chain delays and difficulty finding workers were having a widespread impact. One survey respondent in food services pointed to "labor shortages, transportation delays and supply constraints" as big issues.

### BUSINESS BRIEFING

## FTC sues to stop Nvidia chip deal

WASHINGTON — The Federal Trade Commission on Thursday sued to block Nvidia's \$40 billion acquisition of a fellow chip company, Arm, halting what would be the biggest semiconductor industry deal in history.

The FTC said the deal between Nvidia, which makes chips, and Arm, which licenses chip technology, would stifle competition and harm consumers. The proposed deal would give Nvidia control over computing technology and designs that rival firms rely on to develop competing chips.

In a statement, Nvidia said it would contest the FTC lawsuit.

The deal had already attracted close scrutiny from regulators in Europe, particularly in Britain, where Arm is headquartered.

## Shell pulls out of Scotland project

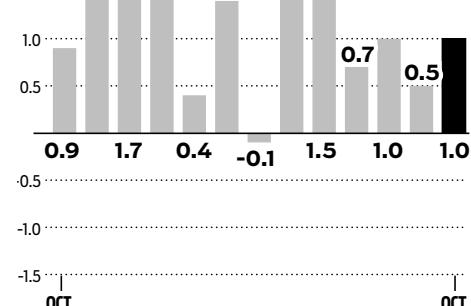
LONDON — Royal Dutch Shell has pulled out of a controversial plan to develop a new oil field near Scotland's Shetland Islands, buoying environmentalists' hopes that the project may be shelved altogether as Britain seeks to combat global warming.

Shell, which had a 30% stake in the Cambo project, said Friday that the decision was based on an assessment of what was best for the company and its shareholders.

The project has faced stiff opposition from groups such as Greenpeace, which argue Britain must stop developing new oil and gas fields if it is serious about reducing carbon emissions. U.K. authorities granted an exploration license for the project in 2001, and the government is now considering whether to authorize commercial operations.

### Manufacturing orders

New orders of all goods, monthly percent change, seasonally adjusted



SOURCE: U.S. Commerce Department

TNS

**BUSINESS**

Plastic and other debris litter a beach on Midway Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. CALEB JONES/2019

## US should make less plastic to save oceans, report says

By Seth Borenstein

Associated Press

America needs to rethink and reduce the way it generates plastics because so much of the material is littering the oceans and other waters, the National Academy of Sciences says in a report.

The United States, the world's top plastics waste producer, generates more than 46 million tons a year, and about 2.2 billion pounds ends up in the world's oceans, according to the academy's report.

If the current rise in plastics pollution continues, the world by 2030 will be putting 58.4 million tons into the oceans each year, or about half the weight of the fish caught in seas, the report said.

Recycling and proper disposal alone aren't enough and can't handle the problem, so the "United States should substantially reduce solid waste generation (absolute and per person) to reduce plastic waste in the environment," said the report by the independent body of scientists founded in 1863 to advise the federal government on big research issues.

"We suggest that one way to reduce plastic waste would be to make less plastic," said oceanographer Kara Lavender Law, a report co-author who has conducted numerous studies about plastic waste.

"Recycling cannot manage the vast majority of the plastic waste that we generate."

The panel provided a menu of potential ways to fix the plastics problem, starting with "national goals and strategies to cap or reduce virgin plastic production."

Virgin plastic is plastic that starts from feedstock that hasn't been used — namely, nonrecycled materials.

The problem, the report said, is that "virgin plastic prices are artificially low due to fossil fuel subsidies, therefore virgin plastics are more profitable to produce" — and U.S. manufacturing of them continues to increase.

"More than 90% of plastics are made from virgin fossil feedstocks, which utilizes roughly 6% of global oil consumption," the report said.

And this makes virgin plastic a climate issue as well as a pollution problem, said study co-author Jenna

Jambeck, a University of Georgia researcher who focuses on waste issues.

The American Chemistry Council, which represents plastics manufacturers, lauded most of the academy's report, but it blasted the idea of limiting plastics production.

The report's figures and recommendations make sense and are grounded in science, said Australian scientist Denise Hardesty who studies the plastics waste issue but wasn't part of the U.S. report.

"We don't want to keep doing beach clean-ups for generations," Hardesty said in an email. "Without a systems change, those (plastic waste) accumulating areas will continue — and will grow."

The issue is important because plastics cause "devastating impacts on ocean health and marine wildlife," the report said.

Fish, marine mammals and seabirds get tangled in plastics or eat them, get sick and frequently die, the report said.

And DNA studies show that some plastics contain human and wildlife viruses and bacteria that can spread disease, the report said.

## Calif. debates \$300M project to replace oil line shut in 2015

By Michael R. Blood

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A proposal to replace an oil pipeline that was shut down in 2015 after causing California's worst coastal spill in 25 years is inching through a government review, even as the state moves toward banning gas-powered vehicles and oil drilling.

Consideration of the \$300 million proposal by Houston-based Plains All American Pipeline is expected to enter a critical phase next year at a time when new scrutiny is being placed on the state's oil industry after an offshore pipeline break in October near Huntington Beach. That rupture released at least 25,000 gallons of crude that closed beaches and took a deadly toll on sea life along one of the world's fabled surf breaks.

Farther north, the 123-mile Plains pipeline travels along the coastline near Santa Barbara before turning inland. It's buried and nearly invisible for much of its length to Kern County, in the state's midsection. For decades it was a vital link between oil platforms off the coast and processing plants on shore, with shipments averaging 1.8 million gallons a day.

Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., opposes the proposal, warning of future risks.

"We've seen time and time again how damaging offshore oil spills are to our coastal ecosystems as well as to our outdoor recreation and tourism economies," Padilla said in a statement.

Plains spokesman Brad Leone said the company safely transported 90 billion gallons last year throughout North America. "Plains is committed to designing, constructing and maintaining these lines in a safe, reliable manner," he said.

The project faces numerous hurdles, including a



A ruptured oil pipeline in 2015 polluted beaches in California's worst coastal spill in decades. Above, workers prepare a containment boom at Refugio State Beach. JAE C. HONG/AP

federal class-action lawsuit from property owners who say Plains lacks the right to use existing easements for a new pipeline. Lead trial counsel Barry Cappello said the project would rip up vineyards and coastal ranches and "our clients never signed up for that."

Shon Hiatt, an associate professor at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business, said the company's motivation to revive the pipeline is obvious.

"They make money on that," Hiatt said.

He said the cost of a barrel of oil could top \$100 next year.

Documents filed by Plains with Santa Barbara County say the replaced pipeline, though smaller than its predecessor, could move up to nearly 1.7 million gallons a day. At current prices, that much oil would be valued at more than \$3 million daily, or potentially over \$1 billion a year, though pipelines often do not run at full capacity.

Oil has been drilled in California since the 19th century, but the project is being debated as the state reckons with its fraught history with fossil fuels.

Climate change is expand-

ing the threat of wildfires, drought and tidal surges, and the state has positioned itself as a global leader in renewable energy and pioneering policies intended to slow the planet's warming.

California plans to ban the sale of new gas-powered cars and trucks by 2035 and end oil production a decade later.

The Plains pipeline will be a symbol of that conflict: the desire for oil to fuel cars, heat buildings and make plastics versus growing political pressure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Biden administration, which recently auctioned vast oil and gas reserves in the Gulf of Mexico, faces the same dilemma.

California's oil and gas industry directly and indirectly supports over 365,000 jobs and has an annual output of over \$150 billion, one study of 2017 data estimated.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom has spoken about the economic challenges of retiring the industry even as he promotes a greener future for the state. His office declined to comment on the Plains project, noting it was under review by government agencies.

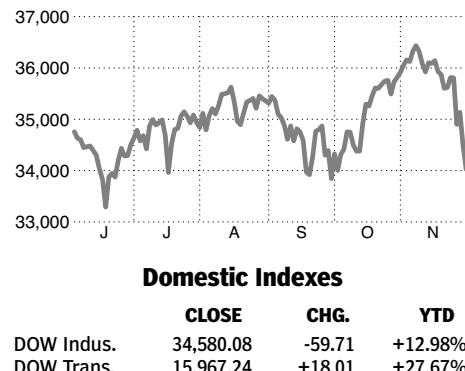
## MARKET RUNDOWN

Saturday, December 4, 2021

**DOW**  
34,580.08 -59.71

**10-YR T-BOND**  
1.33% -.11

**GOLD**  
\$1,782.00 +21.30



Commodities		
FUELS	CLOSE	PREV.
Crude Oil (bbl)	66.26	+66.50 +36.56%
Natural Gas (mm btu)	4.13	+4.06 +62.74%
Unleaded Gas (gal)	1.95	+1.97 +37.16%
METALS	CLOSE	PREV.
Gold (oz)	1,782.00	+1,760.70 -5.87%
Silver (oz)	22.45	+22.28 -14.76%

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

Foreign Exchange		Money Rates	
ForEx in U.S.	U.S. \$ in ForEx	PREV.	CLOSE WK.
Britain	1.3231	.7558	Prime rate 3.25 3.25
Canada	.7790	1.2836	3-mo. T-Bill 0.06 0.06
China	.1568	6.3764	6-mo. T-Bill 0.09 0.10
Euro	1.1312	.8840	5-yr T-Note 1.13 1.16
Japan	.008879	112.63	10-yr T-Note 1.33 1.49
Mexico	.046784	21.3751	30-yr T-Bond 1.67 1.83

(Previous and change figures reflect current contract.)

### Global Markets

FRANKFURT 15,169.98 -93.13 -.61% +10.58%

LONDON 7,122.32 -6.89 -.10% +10.24%

HONG KONG 23,766.69 -22.24 -.09% -12.72%

NIKKEI 28,029.57 +276.20 +1.00% +2.13%

### Domestic Indexes

CLOSE CHG. YTD

DOW Indus.	34,580.08	-59.71	+12.98%
DOW Trans.	15,967.24	+18.01	+27.67%
DOW Util.	914.03	+9.93	+5.71%
NYSE Comp.	16,347.87	-127.38	+12.55%
Nasdaq Comp.	15,085.47	-295.85	+17.05%
S&P 500	4,538.43	-38.67	+20.83%
S&P 400	2,702.14	-35.15	+17.15%
Wilshire 5000	46,360.95	-541.75	+17.50%
Russell 2000	2,159.31	-47.02	+9.34%

### Stocks of Local Interest

CLOSE CHG. YTD

STOCK (TICKER)	CLOSE	CHG.	%CHG.	YTD
AMC Entertainment A (AMC)	29.01	-1.27	+1268.4	
AT&T Inc (T)	23.46	+.41	-18.4	
Adv Micro Dev (AMD)	144.01	-6.67	+57.0	
American Airlines Gp (AAL)	16.62	-.80	+5.4	
Amphenol Corp (APH)	81.67	+.21	...	
Apple Inc (AAPL)	161.84	-.192	+22.0	
Applovin Corp A (APP)	93.53	+.321	+43.5	
Ardelyx Inc (ARDX)	1.52	-.18	-76.5	
Avangrid Inc (AGR)	50.39	+.97	+10.9	
Bank of America (BAC)	43.87	-.102	+44.7	
Barnes Group (B)	45.81	+.57	-9.6	
Booking Holdings (BKNG)	2114.44	-57.49	-5.1	
Brist Myr Sqb (BMY)	56.32	+.91	-9.2	
CVS Health Corp (CVS)	90.87	+.88	+33.0	
Carnival Corp (CCL)	17.20	-.69	-20.6	
Carrier Global Corp (CARR)	56.12	+.60	+48.8	
Charter Communic (CHTR)	67.90	+.890	+2.7	
Cigna Corp (CI)	199.86	+.027	-4.0	
Cleveland-Cliffs Inc (CLF)	20.12	-.01	+38.2	
Comcast Corp A (CMCSA)	51.78	+.28	-1.2	
ContextLogic Inc (WISH)	3.28	-.08	-82.0	
DiDi Global Inc (DIDI)	6.07	-.173	-57.1	
Disney (DIS)	146.22	-.98	-19.3	
DocuSign Inc (DOCU)	135.09	-98.73	-39.2	
DraftKings Inc (DKNG)	28.37	-.293	-39.1	
EMCOR Group Inc (EME)	123.82	-.48	+35.4	
Esperion Therap (ESPR)	5.25	-.372	-79.8	
Ethan Allen (ETD)	23.49	+.08	+16.2	
Eversource Energy (ES)	85.30	+.222	-1.4	
Ford Motor (F)	19.14	-.73	+117.7	
FuelCell Energy (FCEL)	7.29	-.86	-34.7	
Gen Dynamics (GD)	197.63	+.315	+32.8	
Gen Electric (GE)	92.77	-.2		

# OPINION

COURANT.COM/OPINION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### As US crumbles, list of whom to blame grows

I can't take it anymore. Looting, carnage, border violations, statue removal, disrespect for the law, guilty until proven innocent, Russia threatening Ukraine. China, Taiwan, North Korea and Iran making nuclear threats; inflation, crypto currencies and toilet paper. Every day is Jan. 6. My country is crumbling and I cannot do anything about it. Vote? Between gerrymandering, mail-in ballots and candidates dumber than me, why? Fortunately, I am 86. If the world ends tomorrow and it might, I have, until the past few years, had a fantastic life. Blame? The list grows longer with every newscast or, more correctly, propaganda moment.

I feel sorry for the nice people who still act civilized and compassionate, hate the people who do not love my country and wish they would all leave. Barring that, I'll just die, laughing/crying at you idiots who are destroying your own lives, our lives, the future, and are too damn stupid to know it. Teachers can change our world if they teach the Golden Rule, not, the government rules.

**Richard Arnold, West Hartford**

### Presidential pardons have gotten out of hand

The article in The Courant "Politics with turkey? Most want to stuff it," was timely and offered techniques to help ensure holiday tranquility. In this politically charged environment we need to put our lives into perspective and reflect upon the real purpose of Thanksgiving. Some rituals should be reevaluated. The annual pardon of two turkeys by the president is a tradition that although harmless, is symbolic of another American tradition. While releasing turkeys is a gesture that has been part of our Thanksgiving tradition, pardoning individuals at the end of a president's term is now a political move that has become a serious injustice. Donald Trump exercised this power, which is granted in the Constitution. Those who have been granted pardons by presidents are among a group of diverse figures ranging from politicians, executives and even a former president, Richard Nixon.

The pardons by Trump include three turkeys who are being investigated for their role in the Jan. 6 insurrection — Michael Flynn, Roger Stone and Steve Bannon. Apparently they have no regrets, remorse, nor do they attempt to live within the boundaries of our laws. Hopefully the two live turkeys, Peanut Butter and Jelly, will enjoy their freedom and their second chance at life.

**Patricia Karwoski, Farmington**

### Dionne got Catholic facts wrong

E.J. Dionne Jr. wrote about the "right of the second Catholic president of the United States to receive Communion" [Page 8, Nov. 20, "A fragile truce in Catholic bishops' war over Biden"]. There is no such thing as an absolute "right" to receive our lord in Holy Communion. To receive Him, one must be a Catholic in good standing, i.e., in the state of grace with no mortal sin on one's soul, believing everything the Church teaches, believing that Communion (the Eucharist) is the sacred body and precious blood of our lord and savior, and having fasted for an hour before receiving Communion. While the fast does not apply to those who are sick, all the other requirements do apply.

A Catholic who receives Holy Communion while not in good standing commits the mortal sin of sacrilege, a horrible sin since it is committed directly against the Lord's body. As with all mortal sins, it can be forgiven only in confession.

**Mary Regan, Ellington**

### Tell Us Your Story

Please send us your true stories, written in your voice.

**Love Etc.** Stories from the heart — your essays about emotional life in the 21st century.

**Why I...** In which you explain why you feel so strongly about something in Connecticut.

**First Person:** In which you explain a deeply private issue against the backdrop of social and economic forces.

**Living Here:** What is it really like to live in Connecticut?

We welcome all submissions and will publish the best. We especially look for younger writers and those whose voices aren't heard often enough. Essays should be 600-700 words, written in the first person and emailed to [oped@courant.com](mailto:oped@courant.com).



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson walks out to speak during a session on Action on Forests and Land Use during the UN Climate Change Conference COP26 on Nov. 2 in Glasgow, Scotland. ERIN SCHAFF / AP

## OP-ED

# It's time for regular folks to tackle the real work on climate change

By Mary Alice Haddad

COP23 is finished — the protesters have left the streets and the leaders have gone home. Important commitments were made and the real work of ensuring that the world lives up to its promises has begun.

For more than a decade I've been studying environmentalists in East Asia, one of the hardest places on the planet to be a political activist, and I've discovered there are five strategies that are effective for making change no matter where you are.

First, make a friend on the inside.

As has been demonstrated these past two weeks with the US-China Joint Declaration, the Deforestation Declaration and the Global Methane Pledge, national leaders are able to make important commitments to take climate action. To the extent that advocates are connected to these leaders (by serving on boards together, meeting at conferences or just by going to school together), they will be able to encourage their leaders to take part in international collaborations. Advocates can become active partners in making positive change by holding leaders accountable — giving them credit for successes and shining a light on failures.

Second, make your solution work locally.

Rather than chanting slogans or proposing global solutions, advocates who have successfully implemented a positive action that works in their local town or city will be respected as people who can get things done. Those local positive examples can then spread.

In 2004 a group of NGOs in Beijing worked to encourage hotels, malls and

other public spaces to raise air-conditioner settings so people wouldn't freeze inside during the summer, businesses would save on electricity and the air would be cleaner because of lower emissions. Businesses loved the idea, and so did the mayor — 26 degrees Celsius (78 Fahrenheit) became the city standard.

By 2006 the idea had spread to the national level, and Premier Wen Jiabao adopted it as a national standard that would help promote the development of a "conservation-minded society" in China.

Third, make it work for business.

Advocates able to find pro-environmental efforts that can also generate a profit will find many allies who can help implement their solutions. Tree Planet, a social enterprise startup in Korea, began by making video games where players planted virtual trees and cared for them. Advertisers would pay for virtual product placement, and for every virtual tree a real one would be planted in an area needing reforestation. Now the company is using crowdfunding to plant forests in landfills, areas suffering desertification, public parks and classrooms that need air-purifying plants.

Fourth, educate policymakers and the public.

Grassroots community-based educational efforts that expose citizens, especially children, to the natural environment will nurture an appreciation of the natural world and a deeper understanding of the connection between humans and the planet. At a more elite level, policymakers are busy people whose attention is often pulled in many directions.

Providing science-based information

about specific environmental problems, articulating concrete solutions, and creating numerous opportunities for policy-makers to claim credit for success are important ways in which advocates can promote positive environmental action.

Finally, art is a powerful way that environmental activists can make people care.

While scientists and businesspeople might talk about numbers, artists spark imagination and engage emotions. One fun example is the green pedestrian crossing designed by Jody Xiong of DDB China.

In 2010, Xiong placed giant white canvases with bare trees across the middle of city crosswalks, setting large blotters with eco-friendly green ink on both sides. People crossing would fill in the "leaves" of the empty trees as they walked, helping them understand that by walking instead of driving they were helping the environment. The project started in seven main streets in Shanghai and expanded to 132 roads in 15 cities across China. An estimated 4 million people took part, and another 5 million were reached by media and social media coverage.

In Glasgow, protesters grabbed our attention and policymakers made ambitious commitments. But COP23 is over. The media spotlight on climate change will move away.

It is time for regular citizens, businesspeople, government officials, students and academics like me to get busy.

We know what works. Now we need to do it.

*Mary Alice Haddad is a professor of government at Wesleyan University*

## OP-ED

# The court's pro-gun, pro-life problem

By E.J. Dionne Jr.

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — On Tuesday, four high school students — ages 14, 16 and 17 — were shot dead in Oxford, Mich., by a 15-year-old classmate firing a 9mm pistol with 15-round magazines.

Less than 24 hours later, a Supreme Court majority that seems on the verge of weakening the nation's gun laws heard arguments in a case that could lead to tougher restrictions on abortion.

Please tell me: What can the words "pro-life" possibly mean when the same people who want to constrain abortion are eager to make it easier for Americans to obtain and carry deadly weapons?

How is it "pro-life" for a nation to accept school shootings as a routine part of our daily news feeds? Can it possibly be "pro-life" to pretend that because no law will ever end all such shootings, it's not worth trying to pass anything that might at least make them less likely?

We take for granted a conservative ideology rooted not in intellectual consistency but in the politics of culture wars that hold abortion rights as an abomination but gun rights as inviolable. And we wonder why the shootings continue.

Let me stipulate: I know people opposed to abortion rights who are, in fact, consistently "pro-life." They fight for tougher gun laws, oppose the death penalty and support far more help for poor women when they bring children into the world. Even if you disagree with them on abortion, you should bless them for their witness and their moral consistency.

But this group is a small minority of the political movement trying to outlaw abortion. The conservatives on the Supreme

Court — judging from oral arguments last month on a New York law restricting handguns and the arguments Wednesday on a Mississippi abortion ban — seem quite comfortable with being pro-gun and anti-abortion. Against all the evidence from countries with stricter gun laws and far lower gun homicide rates, the pro-gun, anti-abortion crowd insists that a massively armed citizenry protects life.

Yes, a few of the court's conservatives expressed qualms during the November argument about guns at Yankee Stadium or in Times Square. But the core conservative commitment to a gunfight-at-the-O.K.-Corral approach to public safety was outlined with great clarity by Justice Samuel Alito Jr.

"There are a lot of armed people on the streets of New York and in the subways late at night right now. Aren't there?" Samuel Alito asked at oral arguments. "All these people with illegal guns, they're on the subway, they're walking around the streets. But the ordinary, hard-working, law-abiding people I mentioned, no, they can't be armed."

Have at it, everybody.

In her recent Opinions Essay on the dangers posed by a 6-to-3 conservative majority on the Supreme Court, my Washington Post colleague Ruth Marcus pointed out archly that justices who tout their devotion to a theory they call "originalism" were happy to ignore many decades of state laws, upheld by the courts, regulating weapons.

"The court's originalists," she wrote, "seemed not at all troubled by abundant historical evidence of states restricting guns in public places."

The disconnect between warm, life-embracing rhetoric about abortion and indif-

ference toward the loss of innocent life furthered by our nation's uniquely permissive gun laws moved Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., to call out this moral scandal on Tuesday night.

"I listened to my Republican colleagues come down here one after another today and talk about the sanctity of life at the very moment that moms and dads in Michigan were being told that their kids weren't coming home because they were shot at school, due to a country that has accepted gun violence, due to Republicans' fealty to the gun lobby," Murphy declared on the Senate floor. "Do not lecture us about the sanctity, the importance of life when 100 people every single day are losing their lives to guns, when kids go to school fearful that they won't return home because a classmate will turn a gun on them."

Murphy's point is amply justified by Republican blockades in the Senate against even modest gun laws, including bills on background checks passed by the House in March. But let's not ignore Democrats who counsel caution on gun legislation for fear of losing further ground in rural areas.

The Michigan shootings are another reminder of the lethality of our political deadlock on guns — a powerlessness Supreme Court majority seems eager to aggravate.

Here's what we're facing: conservative jurists ready to expand states' rights when it comes to limiting or banning abortion but equally prepared to block states from enacting gun laws aimed at protecting the right of their people to live beyond their teenage years.

*E.J. Dionne writes about politics for The Washington Post.*

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## Stuff

**ART DEALERS & COLLECTORS:** This winter scenic view book, deer snow, and trees show leaves until spring. What brings life to this painting are the shadows! It was painted in 1936 by a famous Connecticut artist, Ruth Fontaine. The painting is 11" x 15", and is on thick vellum.

In 1803, and many years afterwards, the Shogun ruled all of EDO. (In 1867 EDO became Tokyo.) The other man is the Shogun's tax creditor. Both men are painted on large panels made of rice paper and silk. As such, being so old, the paper is very fragile and must be relined! All 3 paintings will only be shown once in Windham CT, in December, between weekday hours of 11AM-1PM. Starting at \$38,000. Call 860.422.9622 about any changes. You can leave a call-back number; please speak slowly. Thank you.

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**ROCKY HILL - JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS - FABULOUS WINTER TAG SALE!** Everything 30-50% off retail prices! No reasonable offer refused. Baseball cards, old stamps, antiques, collectibles, new items, marbles, Star Trek Items and 400 comics! Please wear a mask. Sat 12/4 8am-1pm Follow signs. 22A Colonial Dr., 06067. For info: 860-995-0007 Jesse

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# pets

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**STONE WALLS** Walkways, natural stone. We can break stone into usable wall stone. Pavers, blue stone, patio, fire pits.

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**WAGON\* RADIO\*FLYER\*** red,2seats,perfect" \$45. 539-5174

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## Wanted To Buy



**1 BUY VINTAGE ELECTRONICS** OLD TOYS, MILITARY JEWELRY, ADVERTISING WATCHES, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, CAMERAS, WATCHES, SIGNS, ART, SPORTS MEMORABILIA, OLD STUFF, ANTIQUES, GUITARS, AMPS, TUBE HI-FI, RECEIVERS, AUDIO EQ, RADIOS, HAM, CB, SAXOPHONES & MANY OTHER OLD ITEMS! CALL 860-707-9350

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Vietnam War, Korea, WWII, Civil War, US German Japanese uniforms, Medals, Patches, Helmets, Clothing, Gloves, Photo Negatives, Letters, Bayonets, Swords, Canteens, Muskets, Powder Flasks, Flags. 860-874-8396



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**COMBINED NOTICE**

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Hartford

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE:** The following self-storage unit contents containing household and other goods will be sold for cash by CubeSmart, 868 Flanders Road, Mystic, CT 06355 to satisfy the lien on December 16th, 2021 at approx. 1:30 PM at www.storage-rentals.com:

Cube #407: David McCroy, 12/3/21 & 12/4/21 7094549

### Connecticut

#### ORDER OF NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Extra Space Storage will sell at public auction, to satisfy the lien of the owner, personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated:

ExtraSpace Storage, 56 Pameacha Ave, Middletown, CT 06457 860-575-7610 December 15, 2021 at 11:00 AM

Brandon Best Unit# 2029 Household items

Chontra Williams Unit# 3006 Household items

Eamonn Galvin Unit# 3017 Household items

Heather Isleib Unit# 4050 Household items

The auction will be listed and advertised on www.storage-rentals.com. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Extra Space Storage may refuse bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.

12/4/21 12/10/21 7099364

### Connecticut

**Notice To:** Brian Rummel, father of child born to Victoria T. on 9/19/20 of parts unknown.

A petition has been filed seeking:

Commitment of minor child(ren) of the above named or vesting of custody and care of said children) of the above named in a lawful, private or public agency or a suitable and worthy person.

The petition, whereby the court's decision can affect your parental rights, if any, regarding minor child(ren) will be heard on: 1/7/22 at 12:30pm at 25 School Street, Rockville, CT 06066

Therefore, ORDERED, that notice of the hearing of this petition be given by publishing this Order of Notice once, immediately upon receipt, in the *Hartford Courant*, a newspaper having a circulation in the town/city of Stafford Springs, CT

Name of Judge/Hon. Dawnie Westbrook Signed: K. Benegany Date signed: 12/2/21

Right to Counsel: Upon proof of inability to pay for a lawyer, the court will make sure that an attorney is provided to you by the Chief Public Defender. Request for an attorney should be made immediately in person, by mail, or by fax at the court office where your hearing is to be held.

12/4/21 7099757

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#### COMBINED NOTICE NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

December 4, 2021

City of Hartford  
Hartford City Hall  
Division of Grants Management, Management and Budget Dept  
550 Main Street, Room 302  
Hartford, CT 06103  
RIGLLO01@hartford.gov

These notices shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities to be undertaken by the City of Hartford through federal funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES, GROUPS AND PERSONS:

On or about December 20, 2021 the City of Hartford will request from HUD to undertake the following project during Fiscal Years 2021-22 which is neither Exempt nor Categorically Excluded:

The project located at 1154-1170 Albany Avenue, the Weaver Building, within the Upper Albany neighborhood of the City of Hartford, CT. The project entails rehabilitation and improvements to 18 vacant apartments that are currently not habitable. This includes repairs and/or replacements of kitchen cabinets and countertops, appliances, bathroom vanities and plumbing, electrical wiring and circuit breakers, fire alarm system, heating systems, doors, windows, trim and painting. Additionally, exterior repairs and improvements, including facade improvements, masonry repairs, repointing and cleaning, paving, landscaping and roofing.

Construction is anticipated to commence in January 2022 with a construction duration of approximately 3 months.

The total cost for the project is estimated at \$ 880,000. Funding for the project will consist of:

• \$500,000 – City of Hartford Section 8 CARES ACT COVID Funds

• \$380,000 – Developer's funding

#### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The City of Hartford has determined that the above-mentioned project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file on the web at <https://www.hartfordct.gov/Government/Departments/DDS/Public-Notices/12.04.2021>.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit

**OBITUARIES BY TOWN**

**BERLIN**  
Erika Witzel  
**CROMWELL**  
Gay Mahder  
**OTHER TOWN IN CT**  
Mary Harper

**ELLINGTON**  
James "Jim" Spencer

**HARTFORD**  
James Ryan

Patricia Williams

**FARMINGTON**  
Wanda Thompson

**HEBRON**  
Nancy Stroebel

**WEST HARTFORD**  
Eileen LaDuke

Patricia Williams

**MIDDLETON**  
Sidney Harmon

**MIDDLETOWN**  
Jo-Anne Balentine

**NEW BRITAIN**  
Irene (Noury) Gordon

**WETHERSFIELD**  
Gay Mahder

Gail Obedzinski

James Ryan

**NEWINGTON**  
Deborah Rochette

Robert Doyle

Robert Doyle

Mary Harper

Mabelle Milliken

James "Jim" Spencer

**PLAINVILLE**  
Wanda Thompson

**BRISTOL**  
Jo-Anne Balentine

**SOUTHBURY**  
Judith O. Callahan

**SOUTHBURY**  
Deborah Rochette

**TOLLAND**  
Mabelle Milliken

Nancy Stroebel

**MANCHESTER**  
Bruce Carmichael

**VERNON**  
Bruce Carmichael

**WINDSOR**  
Bill Craig

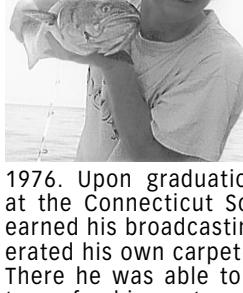
**WINDSOR**  
Bill Craig

**GLASTONBURY**  
Gail Obedzinski

\* Denotes name listing only.

Please note: not all death notices are in alphabetical order.

**OBITUARIES****Craig, Bill**

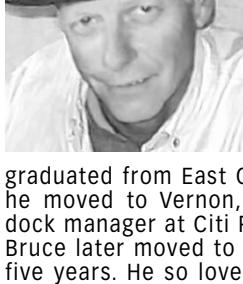
 Bill Craig, 63, of Windsor, loving father to Jeremy Craig, passed away peacefully on Sunday, November 28, 2021, surrounded by his family. Bill was born on February 18, 1958, in Newport News, VA, son to the late John B. and Nancy Ann (Newton) Craig. Bill attended Agawam High School in Massachusetts and graduated with the class of 1976. Upon graduation, he continued his education at the Connecticut School of Broadcasting where he earned his broadcasting certificate. Bill owned and operated his own carpet business, Craig Custom Carpets. There he was able to create unique and elegant patterns for his customers. He was also employed with Dalene Flooring in South Windsor for many years before his retirement in 2012. Bill enjoyed spending time outdoors. He was an avid motorcyclist and loved taking his Corvette and motorcycle on scenic rides through the Chester and Huntington Massachusetts area. During the summer months, you could find him on his 28' Bayliner, the "Lady Di," down in the Long Island Sound cruising and fishing for Stripers. Bill also owned his own snowmobiles, riding in Vermont and New Hampshire with his wife, family and friends. Most of all, Bill's perfect day consisted of spending time in his back yard, staring out at the Rainbow Reservoir with his beloved German Shepherd "Queen Gene" grilling, cooking and enjoying life. In addition to his son Jeremy, Bill is survived by his wife, Angie (Clyne) Craig of Windsor; his German Shepherd and best friend, Gene; his four siblings John Craig and his wife Alice of Somers, Lori Curran of Enfield, Jean Lucey and her husband Larry of Somers and James Craig of Feeding Hills, MA; his mother-in-law Antema Clyne of Ludlow, MA as well as many nieces, nephews and extended family. Bill was predeceased by his parents, his father-in-law Martin Clyne and his brother-in-law Hugh Curran.

A time of visitation will be held on Monday, December 6, 2021 from 4-6 p.m. at the Carmon Poquonock Funeral Home, 1816 Poquonock Ave. (Rte 75) in Windsor with a funeral service will begin at 6 p.m. at the funeral home. Burial will be private. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 417005, Boston, MA 02241 or to the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc., 103 Vision Way, Bloomfield, CT 06002. To leave an online message of condolence for his family, please visit [www.carmonfuneralhome.com](http://www.carmonfuneralhome.com).



Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

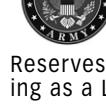
**Carmichael, Bruce Walter**

 Bruce Walter Carmichael, 59, of Manchester, passed away peacefully surrounded by his loved ones Monday, November 29, 2021, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. Bruce was born in Manchester, CT, on December 1, 1961, son of the late Frederick P. and Frances (Crabb) Carmichael. He grew up in East Granby, CT and graduated from East Granby High School. After school he moved to Vernon, CT and worked as the loading dock manager at Citi Place in Hartford for many years. Bruce later moved to Mesquite, NV where he lived for five years. He so loved the west and being a cowboy, working on ranches and ranches for troubled teens. He loved attending rodeos and riding horses. He moved back to CT and settled in Manchester where he worked for Konover Residential for the past 5 years. He was a member of the Italian Club in Tolland and loved to play pool, cards and spend time at the pool and beach, and socialize with family and friends. We will always remember that smile and hand held out for whoever he met! He leaves his son, Brandon Carmichael of Manchester, CT; Stepdaughter Brooklyn Wilson of Las Vegas, NV; his best furry friend and constant companion cat, Tank; his brothers, Frederick P. Carmichael Jr. and his wife Dawn of Tolland, CT and Robert Carmichael and his wife Jean of Kansas; his sisters, Carroll Piorek of Bristol RI and Janice Shattetree of Manchester, CT. And many nieces and nephews that loved this cowboy. A celebration of life will be held in the spring of 2022. Donations can be made to the charity of your choice in Bruce's name. Samson & Carmon Funeral Home in South Windsor has care of the arrangements. For online condolences please visit [www.carmonfuneralhome.com](http://www.carmonfuneralhome.com)

Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

**OBITUARIES****Balentine, Jo-Anne (Feehan)**

East Calais, VT



After high school, Jo-Anne enlisted in the United States Army in 1966. She served until 1984 when she continued in the Army Reserves until her honorable discharge in 1996, retiring as a Lt. Colonial.

Jo-Anne attended several colleges including Trinity College in Connecticut where she received a Master's Degree.

On February 14, 1975, Jo-Anne married George Balentine at the East Calais Church. Sadly, Mr. Balentine unexpectedly died on December 18, 2013.

Jo-Anne worked primarily as a school teacher for several schools in Central Vermont including, Hazen Union, Cabot High School, Union 32, Main Street Middle School, and Montpelier High School. She even ran a preschool from her home. Jo-Anne was also proud of teaching many of the area children swimming lessons at her house.

Jo-Anne and George enjoyed spending time in Florida. After George's passing, Jo-Anne settled in Stuart, FL for several years before returning home to Vermont.

Jo-Anne was a member of the Stuart Florida Elks Club, the Stuart Congregational Church, and the local YMCA. She enjoyed crocheting, Oil Painting, and sewing cloths. She also enjoyed cooking, especially Apple Fritters.

Survivors include her oldest son, Aiden Balentine of Montpelier and her youngest son, Andrew Balentine of East Calais, VT; a sister Corrine Johnson of Stuart, FL. She was predeceased by a son, John Balentine and sister, Louise Circle.

A memorial service will be announced at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Berlin Genesis Rehab Center, 98 Hospitality Drive, Berlin-Barre, VT 05641 or to the Alzheimer's Association, Vermont Chapter, 75 Talcott Road, Suite 40, Williston, VT 05495.

Those wishing to express online condolences may do so at [www.guarandsons.com](http://www.guarandsons.com).

Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

**OBITUARIES****Mahder, Gay (Bradbury)**

Gay (Bradbury) Mahder, 89, a longtime resident of Wethersfield, passed away peacefully on Friday, November 26, 2021, at Covenant Village of Cromwell, where she had lived for the past 15 years. She was the beloved wife of John Mahder III, who predeceased her in 2006.

Gay was born May 24, 1932 in Hartford, daughter to the late Frank and Anna (Cook) Bradbury. She was raised in Wethersfield and graduated from Wethersfield High School, Class of 1950.

Gay continued her education at the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, where she earned her degree in Nursing as a member of the class of 1953. She began her career at Hartford Hospital as a Registered Nurse upon graduation and worked there until 1955, at which time she and John were blessed with the first of their three children. At that point, Gay decided to remain at home and raise her family, providing a wonderful upbringing and much love for her three sons.

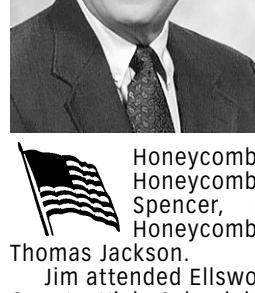
Gay and John led full and meaningful lives, watching their sons grow and have families of their own. The family enjoyed many wonderful and happy years at their home on Smith Mountain Lake in Virginia, where family and friends made lifelong memories. Gay was a devoted member of Bethany Lutheran Church, West Hartford. She was also a charter member of Trinity Ecumenical Parish in Virginia, and a member of Bethany Covenant Church in Cromwell in her later years. She was involved in many volunteer activities, and remained interested in health care her entire life, chairing the health care committee at Covenant Living and leading a stroke support group.

Gay will be deeply missed and forever remembered by her loving family; three sons and daughters-in-law, John David and Peggy Mahder of Fairfield, Mark Alan and Lynn Kelly Mahder of Wethersfield, and Andrew Carl and Patty Mahder of Chapel Hill, NC; seven adored grandchildren, John Kevin and his wife Jacqueline, Meghan Stuer and her husband Shaun, Katherine, Kelli, Kyle, Christopher and Stephanie, and three great-grandchildren, Sawyer, John Jameson and Charlotte. In addition to her husband and parents, Gay was predeceased by a brother, John Cook "Jack" Bradbury.

The Mahder family will receive relatives and friends at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield on Sunday, December 12 from 12-2 p.m., concluding with a celebration of Gay's life, with Chaplain Richard Cudmore of Covenant Living of Cromwell officiating. Gay and John will be interred in Virginia at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297-1061, online, [lwr.org](http://lwr.org) or to a charity of the donor's choice. To share a memory of Gay with her family, please visit [www.desopofuneralchapel.com](http://www.desopofuneralchapel.com)



Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

**Spencer, James "Jim" H.**

James H. "Jim" Spencer of Ellington, husband of the late Merilyn S. "Mimi" (Sondles) Spencer, passed away peacefully at home on November 18, 2021. He was born on August 20, 1932, in Middlebourne, West Virginia, the son of the late Jack and Imogene (Mayfield) Spencer. Jim leaves behind son Stephen Spencer and daughter-in-law Anna Spencer, daughter Jill Honeycomb and son-in-law Stephen Honeycomb, granddaughters Audrey Spencer, Evelyn Spencer, and Paige Honeycomb, and close cousins Rodney and Thomas Jackson.

Jim attended Ellsworth Elementary School and Tyler County High School in Middlebourne, WV, where he played baseball, basketball, and football in his sophomore through senior years. Upon graduating from high school, Jim received a football scholarship to attend West Virginia Wesleyan University, however, elected to attend West Virginia University and enlisted in the University's ROTC program. Following two years of service in the Army Corp of Engineers, in April of 1954 Jim married the love of his life Merilyn, his wife of 59 years, and enrolled at Ohio State University. While Jim pursued his B.S. Degree in Aeronautical and Aerospace Engineering, Merilyn taught school in Columbus, Ohio, and their son Stephen was born.

Upon graduation, Jim accepted a position with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft in East Hartford, CT. Soon after relocating, Jim and Mimi moved to their first house in Vernon, CT, and it was there that their daughter Jill was born. While at Pratt & Whitney, Jim earned his M.S. Degree in Mechanical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, served in various engineering and customer service positions, and completed his career as Vice President and General Manager of Turbine Overhaul Services in Singapore, a joint venture between Pratt & Whitney and Singapore Aerospace. In 1978, Jim and Mimi left Vernon and moved to East Windsor CT. Upon retiring from Pratt & Whitney in 1992, Jim accepted a position as Vice President and General Manager of AAR Engine Components Repair in Windsor, CT until 1995, and retired following work as a consultant for Pemco in Birmingham, AL. Jim and Mimi moved to Ellington, CT in 2003, and enjoyed joint homes in Ellington and Palm Coast, FL.

Along with Mimi, Jim was an active and dedicated member of both the Vernon and East Windsor Congregational Churches. There Jim was able to indulge in his passion for music, utilizing his tenor voice in both the choir and as a frequent soloist for the benefit and enjoyment of all fortunate enough to hear him. Together Jim and Mimi also engaged in their passion for raising and showing Appaloosa horses, and particularly enjoyed their time living overseas in Singapore and at their second home in Palm Coast, FL. Jim always remained an avid golfer, and a dedicated fan of West Virginia University, Ohio State, and UConn football and basketball.

A Memorial Service will be held at the First Congregational Church of East Windsor (Scantic Church), 124 Scantic Road, East Windsor, CT, on Saturday, December 11, 2021, at 11 a.m. Memorial donations in Jim's memory may be made to the ASPCA. For online condolences and guest book, please visit [www.carmonfuneralhome.com](http://www.carmonfuneralhome.com)



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**Hartford Courant**  
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## OBITUARIES

### **Doyle, Robert C.**

"Bob" Doyle of Lebanon, CT lost his hard-fought battle with Covid 19 on November 24, 2021. Born in New Britain, CT in 1960 he was the son of the late Barbara Paonessa Fazio and William Doyle, Sr. A 1978 graduate of Rocky Hill High School he was employed at Volvo Cars White Plains as Co-General Sales Manager. For many years he was an avid boater and lived with his family on a boat until purchasing a farm in Lebanon, CT earlier this year. He loved making improvements to the property and adding animals to it. Bob is survived by his wife, Jamie Collins Doyle and their two children, Ayden and Brianna Doyle. Additionally, he is survived by his other children Katrina Karissa Doyle, Amber Blanco and her husband Paul, Desiree Dunn and her husband Christopher, Robert Doyle Jr. and several grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, William Doyle, Jr. and his wife Dawn, and two sisters Maryann Doyle Matway and her husband John, and Teresa Fazio Winters, and her husband John, his sister-in-law Melissa Tackett and brother-in-law, Billy Collins together with several nieces, nephews, and great nieces/nephews. A virtual funeral will be held on January 9, 2022. To participate go to <http://memoriesofbobdoyle.com> for details. A Celebration of Life will be held at the farm on Sunday, May 15, 2022, from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers the family is requesting plants, trees or donations for a bench that will be placed in a garden dedicated to him on his farm.

Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

### **Harper, Mary Arlene (Stafford)**

Mary Arlene (Stafford) Harper of Mansfield Center, CT died on November 29, 2021 at the age of 93. She was predeceased by her beloved husband and soul mate of 67 years, Walter L. Harper. Mary was born in Bridgeport, CT in October 1928. She was predeceased by her parents, George L. and Marion (Bumbera) Stafford; her sister, Dorothy Dickinson; and two half-brothers, Milo and Burt Worthing. She is survived by her sister, Charlotte Taylor; daughters, Beth Strathy (John), Marianne Metcalfe (predeceased by Brigham), Kathryn Pitney (Robert), and Jamie Harper (Jacqui); and sons Walter Harper (Theresa) and John Harper (Laura). She is also survived by her 13 grandchildren, Damian Larkins, Trevor Larkins (Alexandria), Sharon Harper, Laureen Harper, Lindsey Metcalfe, Heather Metcalfe, Veronica Harper, Gregory Rabus (Jennifer), Matthew Rabus, Patrick Rabus, Michael Kingston, Tessa Kingston and Rachel Smolskis; along with 5 great grandchildren, Hannah Rabus, Miles Rabus, Alexander Rabus, Ian Rabus and Makenna Larkins.

Mary graduated from Bassick High School in Bridgeport, and Eastern Connecticut State University with a bachelor's degree in Middle School Education and from the University of Hartford with a Master's Degree in Art Education. She held a variety of art teaching positions in Bolton Middle School, Bolton High School and the Longley School at Mansfield State Training School where she worked with developmentally challenged middle school children to assess brain development through art. She also taught an interdisciplinary puppetry course for students in the University of Hartford's Music and Art Schools.

Mary was a talented artist. She received two Connecticut Commission of the Arts Grants and held a patent for the Jiffy Stage, a stage for shadow puppets for use in elementary classrooms. In addition, she shared her artistic gifts as Camp Historian at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford, CT from 1988 until 2010. At the end of her tenure, the camp personnel and the campers held a "Mary Harper Day Parade" throughout the campground and a celebration luncheon on the lake dock. Her whole family attended that festive day in her honor.

The greatest gift our mom gave us was the ability to think. She never told us to color within the lines, in fact, she encouraged us to create our own. Mom showed us how to think outside of the box and to be tenacious when pursuing a goal. When she decided on a goal, she would pursue it until it became a reality. She envisioned a home on Browns Rd. in Storrs and scouted out the most beautiful farmland on the road; only, it was not for sale. That didn't stop her; once she had a vision, she would make sure it happened. Sure enough, after much persuasion, the owner sold, and our parents built our family home. Later she envisioned a pond in the woods and purchased more acreage from the landowner and had a pond created using the natural springs and a brook on the land. We all spent many idyllic days at the pond, swimming, skating, picnicking and even camping!

She also made sure that her children had cultural opportunities to attend art shows and concerts at UCONN and made sure we had opportunities to take music lessons and attend summer camp every year. She supported us as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and/or 4-H members.

Some of our favorite memories are the beach days spent at Misquamicut in Rhode Island with our parents. We still have no idea how they packed the six kids and their friends into a three-bedroom cottage every summer. In addition, we made weekly journeys to the beach, arriving at 9 AM in the Ford Station Wagon with a cooler packed with sandwiches and drinks.

Mom was as smart as a whip and had a great sense of humor. Her intellect and humor were strong until the end and so was her determination to live, even while ALS took her ability to speak and continued making its advances. She gave it a good fight and we are so proud of her.

We would like to thank Terry and Bruce Robertson, her neighbors, for watching out for Mom when we couldn't be there, her hospice nurses from Hospice Care Mansfield (Lori, Holly, Sharon and Sara), her social worker (Karen), her pastor (Ivan), her caregivers from Companions & Homemakers (Susan, Keishmarie, Christine and Jeanise), and Jamie and Jacqui Harper for moving in with Mom so she could stay in her beloved home until the end.

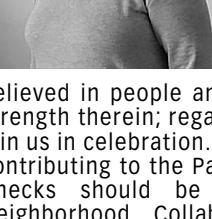
Mary's services will be private. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial contributions to The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford, CT. For an online memorial guestbook, please visit [www.potterfuneralhome.com](http://www.potterfuneralhome.com).

Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

### **Williams , Patricia Mae**

Patricia Mae Williams, 73, of West Hartford, Ct passed away on January 13, 2021 and at that time we were not able to gather "in person" to celebrate her life. Join us on December 8th, 2021 at 6pm for "A Birthday Gone Home Celebration" to be held at The First Cathedral, 1151 Blue Hills Avenue, Bloomfield, CT 06002. Patricia Williams believed in people and community and the value and strength therein; regardless of status or stature. Come join us in celebration. In lieu of flowers please consider contributing to the Patricia Williams Scholarship Fund. Checks should be made out to Upper Albany Neighborhood Collaborative (UANC), 1229 Albany Avenue, Hartford, CT 06112.

Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)



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Visit the obituary section on [courant.com](http://courant.com) to share memories of loved ones.

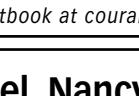
### **LaDuke, Eileen K.**

Eileen K. LaDuke, 96, of West Hartford, passed away on November 24th, 2021. Born in Ireland, (nee Beechinor), she was wife of the late Louis H. LaDuke, Sr. and is survived by their children, Louis H. LaDuke, Jr. of New Hartford, Lawrence LaDuke of North Granby, and Laura LaDuke of Enfield, CT. She leaves 5 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. As a long-time member of the Mark Twain Masquers theater group, she thoroughly enjoyed performing in numerous productions, as well as corporate training videos, and TV commercials. She loved parades, and will always be remembered as a warm and caring mother and friend. Funeral services will be private, and any donations in her memory can be made in support of our veterans.

Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

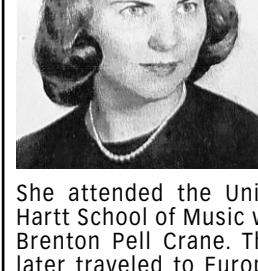
### **Rochette, Deborah Ann (Santerre)**

  
Deborah Ann (Santerre) Rochette, of Newington passed away on November 30th 2021. She was the beloved wife of Joseph A. Rochette. Born in Southington, daughter of Wilbert Santerre, of Newington and the late Florence (Maple) Santerre. Deborah was a hairdresser for 40 years. It was her true passion and she made many friends along the way. Her other love was art, always keeping busy with her paint by numbers or crocheting blankets. She will be missed by so many. Along with her husband and father, Deborah leaves behind her daughter Shannon Martin and her fiance Christopher Brown of Groton. She was predeceased by her daughter Jaime Lynn Martin and brother Richard Santerre. Relatives and friends are invited to call on Sunday, December 5th, 2021 from 2:00 pm-5:00 pm, at Duska Family Funeral Homes at Newington Memorial, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington. Deborah's funeral service will be held on Monday December 6th, 2021, at 10:00 am at Newington Memorial. Deborah will be lovingly laid to rest in West Meadow Cemetery, Newington. Memorial donations may be made to Make a Wish Foundation, 56 Commerce Dr, Trumbull, CT 06611. To share a memory with her family, please visit us at Duska Family Funeral Home | Newington & New Britain, CT



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### **Stroebel, Nancy Crane**

  
Nancy Crane Stroebel, 81, of Andover, Connecticut passed away peacefully on Wednesday, November 24, 2021. Nancy was born in 1940 and was brought up in Norwalk, Connecticut where she developed interests in music and English horseback riding. She eventually ran a horseback riding camp in the Berkshires in Massachusetts.

She attended the University of Miami and then the Hartt School of Music where she met her first husband, Brenton Pell Crane. They both majored in music and later traveled to Europe with their toddler, Katherine, to pursue careers in performance and composition. Eventually, they settled in a small town in Holland for almost 4 years. They later moved back to a small farm in the United States where Nancy rescued animals. Nancy performed with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra in Massachusetts, taught music in public schools in Connecticut, and wrote children's musicals and books. She loved teaching her students who often stayed in touch as they grew up. After her first husband passed away, she married Charles Stroebel. They enjoyed nature, cooking, gardening, and music. They both performed with the local community orchestra in Willimantic, Connecticut. Nancy was always trying to help others in her community and elsewhere. She especially took pride in finding ways to help the Andover Fire Department because she recognized how hard they worked on a volunteer basis. Nancy is survived by her daughter, Katherine Anne Francis; her son-in-law, James Arthur Francis; and her grandchildren, Kevin Andrew Francis and Rachel Ann Francis and Rachel's fiancé, Andrew LaMotte. She is also survived by her cousins, Patricia and David Waby and their children; her stepdaughter Lisa Caldwell and her daughter Sara; her stepson, Chuck Stroebel and his children; and her beloved friends, Bob Holman and Caren Fogarassi, whose friendship meant the world to her. The family would like to thank Nancy's home health care providers for their assistance, kindness, and friendship. Due to COVID restrictions, the family will have a private gathering to celebrate her life. Donations may be made to the Andover Fire Department or to any animal rescue organization of your choice. For online condolences please visit [www.pierrasfuneralhome.com](http://www.pierrasfuneralhome.com).

Please sign guestbook at [courant.com/obituaries](http://courant.com/obituaries)

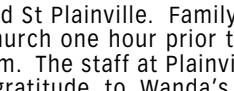
### **Thompson, Wanda**

  
Wanda (Mickiewicz) Thompson, loving Mother and Nana, passed away with her family by her side on Friday, November 26, 2021. Born and raised in Portland, Maine, she was one of five children to the late Joseph and Agnes (Symc) Mickiewicz. A retiree of Hamilton Standard, Wanda was always on the go, even more so in her retirement

years that she spent travelling to visit her siblings, tending to her flower gardens, or shopping the best deals and sharing her great bargain finds with her family and friends. She enjoyed playing BINGO, cards and any other occasion when she was surrounded by her family, and had a passion for dancing. Remembered for her sweet tooth, and her generous, fun-loving personality, she will be dearly missed, leaving many cherished memories of love and laughter.

She leaves her son, Gerald (Jerry) Thompson and his wife, Diane of Farmington; her sister, Josephine Howard; her son-in-law, James Robinson; her granddaughter Wendy (Robinson) Loubier; grandsons Scott (Ellen) Thompson and Christopher (Jennifer) Thompson; four great-grandsons and a great-granddaughter; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her husband Wilfred, daughter Debra Robinson, her granddaughter Jill Marie Robinson, her brothers Stanley and John Anthony "Mickie" Mickiewicz, and her sister Stella Holcomb.

In lieu of flowers, Wanda may be remembered with contributions to the Plainville Community Food Pantry, PO Box 233, Plainville, CT 06062. A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday December 10, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. at Our Lady of Mercy Church, 94 Broad St Plainville. Family and friends may gather at the church one hour prior to the mass, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. The staff at Plainville Funeral Home extends their gratitude to Wanda's family for their trust. For online expressions of sympathy, please visit [www.PlainvilleFuneralHome.com](http://www.PlainvilleFuneralHome.com)



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### **Milliken, Mabelle (Woodworth)**

  
Mabelle (Woodworth) Milliken, 90, of Tolland, beloved wife of the late Howard L. Milliken, passed away peacefully on Monday, November 29, 2021 at Manchester Manor. Born in Tolland, the daughter of the late Harlan and Florence (Dicks) Woodworth, Mabelle was a lifelong resident. She was a graduate of Tolland High School. Prior to her retirement, Mabelle was employed by Connecticut Mutual Insurance Company in Hartford for many years. After her retirement, she would shop and take her friends and neighbors to the store or to their appointments. She also became the taxicab for all of her grandchildren. She was a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother, great grandmother, sister and friend who enjoyed spending time with her family and friends. Mabelle is survived by her two sons, Kevin Milliken and his wife Gale of Glen Rock, PA, and Barry Milliken of Tolland; five grandchildren, Rebecca Mongeau, Justin Milliken and his wife Jessica, Crystal Milliken, Lauren Finck, and Shelby Milliken; three great grandchildren, Mason Mongeau, Austin Milliken, and Liam Mongeau; three sisters, Marjorie Wong of Tolland, Ruth Gsell of Tolland, and Barbara Wheeler of TN; and several nieces and nephews. She was also predeceased by her sister Dorothy Dove. Funeral services and burial are private and at the convenience of her family. Memorial donations in her memory may be made to The Tolland Fire Department Inc., 191 Merrow Road, Tolland, CT 06084. Ladd-Turkington & Carmon Funeral Home in Vernon is caring for the arrangements. For online condolences and guest book, please visit [www.carmonfuneralhome.com](http://www.carmonfuneralhome.com)



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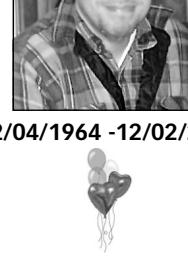
### **Witzel, Erika**

Erika Witzel, 85, died peacefully Thanksgiving weekend to join her husband Hans and daughter's family dog Rex. Erika was born in Germany residing in Berlin for most of the 59 years. She leaves behind a daughter Christine Pelletier & husband Dale, her Kaylee (granddaughter), her best friend of over 50 years Christine Ravizza and her daughter Kendra, family & friends in Germany along with the friends she came to know here. She will be dearly missed. We would like to thank Jerome Home & Constellation Hospice for the wonderful care & support. There are no services scheduled since the family wishes to mourn and celebrate her life in private. In lieu of flowers you can donate to Kaylee's college fund or a berlin veteran post. She was always thinking of her granddaughter's future and the military. Paul A. Shaker Funeral Home, 764 Farmington Ave, New Britain, has charge of arrangements.

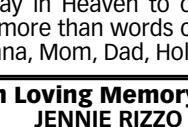
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### **IN MEMORIAM**

#### **In Loving Memory Of SHAUN A 'POP' KENNEDY**

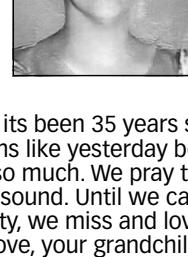


12/04/1964 - 12/02/2020



Our dearest Shaun aka Pop, miss you still and always will. Happy 57th Birthday in Heaven to our forever angel. We love and miss you more than words can say. With love, Debbie, Jordan, Jenna, Mom, Dad, Holly & Donna

#### **In Loving Memory Of JENNIE RIZZO**

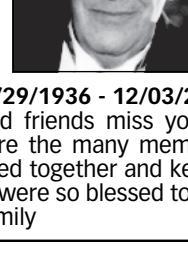


Grandmother, its been 35 years since you left us.

It seems like yesterday because we miss you so much. We pray to God that he keeps you safe and sound. Until we can be together for eternity, we miss and love you.

Love, your grandchildren.

#### **In Loving Memory Of ALLEN R. SALE**



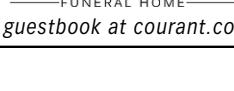
8/29/1936 - 12/03/2015

All your family and friends miss you so very much. We will always treasure the many memories of the wonderful times we enjoyed together and keep them close to our hearts forever. We were so blessed to have you in our lives. Love, Diane and family

**E**veryone leaves a legacy. Celebrate an extraordinary life by creating an enduring Life Story on [Legacy.com](http://Legacy.com) with biography, photos, eulogies, letters and cherished mementoes.



For more information, visit the obituary section on [courant.com](http://courant.com) to share memories of loved ones.



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Miracle-Ear's latest advanced digital hearing solution - the **Miracle-Ear Genius** - can help you enjoy a better quality of life. Are you really getting the best out of your *vintage* hearing aids?

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All wrapped up in our smallest hearing aid ever!

# Hartford Courant CONNECTICUT

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## Benefits open to LGBTQ veterans

Those discharged for their sexual orientation or expression now eligible to apply for the first time

**By Jesse Leavenworth**

Hartford Courant

Connecticut's Department of Veterans Affairs has set up a review board to restore benefits to certain veterans with other than honorable discharges, including those who were dismissed due to sexual orientation and post-traumatic stress disorder.

The five-member Eligibility Qualifying Review Board will review applications and make

recommendations to the DVA commissioner. Reviews also cover discharges primarily due to gender identity or gender expression, traumatic brain injury or military sexual trauma.

Establishment of the board follows passage and expansion of a state law, the first of its kind in the nation, state veterans affairs officials said.

"Veterans who suffered from government-sponsored discriminatory policies because of who

they are lost access to VA health care and benefits such as education, memorial services and home loans," lead legislative sponsor Rep. Raghib Allie-Brennan (D-Bethel) said.

"The unfair discharges drove some into depression or substance abuse," Allie-Brennan said. "As we mark the tenth anniversary of the repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell,' LGBTQ veterans in Connecticut now have the opportunity to access the state benefits they earned in service to our country."

"As board members," review board Chairman Nikiforos Mathews, a U.S. Army veteran

and attorney, said, "we are deeply honored to provide a forum for Connecticut veterans with an Other-Than-Honorable characterization of discharge due to PTSD, TBI, being a victim of sexual violence or who were discharged based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, to be heard and given an opportunity to have state Veterans Benefits restored."

"Connecticut's expanded law is a great step forward in recognizing the honorable service of veterans no matter their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression," Veterans

Affairs Commissioner Thomas J. Saadi said.

Saadi has emailed detailed information about the eligibility determination process to all state agencies, municipalities, veterans organizations and advocacy groups across the state. The DVA also launched the EQRB webpage today at: portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/Eligibility-Qualifying-Review-Board.

Veterans with bad conduct or dishonorable discharges are not eligible for veterans benefits.

Jesse Leavenworth can be reached at [jleavenworth@courant.com](mailto:jleavenworth@courant.com)

### CORONAVIRUS IN CONNECTICUT

## Positive test rate keeps climbing

Daily metric reaches 5.3% as weekly hits highest since mid-Jan.

**By Eliza Fawcett**

Hartford Courant

Connecticut's weekly COVID-19 test positivity rate surpassed 5% on Friday, reaching its highest point since mid-January.

At a press conference in Oxford, Gov. Ned Lamont said that the pandemic appears to be "ramping up" again.

"To say we're the lowest in the region gives you no comfort at all," he said of Connecticut's positivity rate.

Connecticut's COVID-19 metrics have spiked significantly in recent weeks, with the state's seven-day COVID-19 positivity rate reaching its highest point in almost a year and hospitalizations more than doubling in less than a month.

At Hartford HealthCare, senior system director of infection prevention Keith Grant said, "We have seen a surge in the number of patients that are coming in positive."

Health experts say COVID-19 metrics may continue to rise amid the holiday season and colder temperatures, which push people indoors and make respiratory viruses like the coronavirus more transmissible.

As of Friday afternoon, the new COVID-19 variant omicron had not been identified in Connecticut, although it was detected in New York on Thursday. Lamont said that he is assuming that omicron is already circulating in the state.

Despite prevailing anxiety surrounding omicron's arrival, Grant said that "From a mitigation perspective, our main concern at this point should be

*Turn to Virus, Page 2*



After the Vietnam War, Nom & Boulieng Vorasane were forced to flee with their five children to the United States, where they were granted asylum in 1980. They are shown with their grandchildren. The Nom & Boulieng Vorasane Scholarship is named in their honor.

## Sharing their story

In parents' honor, BouNom Bakery funds UConn Asian studies institute scholarship

**By Susan Dunne**

Hartford Courant

Lao-tian-born Khamla Vorasane's parents endured great hardship to bring their family to the United States.

Her father was a military man and supported the Americans in the Vietnam War. After the war, he was sent to prison, and his wife and five children went into hiding until his release, when the family fled and eventually ended up in America.

In her parents' honor, BouNom Bakery in Avon, which Vorasane opened with her sister, has started a scholarship for UConn students studying to be teachers who take classes in Asian and Asian American studies.

The Nom & Boulieng Vorasane Scholarship is named after Vorasane's parents, who also are the inspiration for the name of the French bakery at 136 Simsbury Road.

Her late parents, mother Nom,

*Turn to BouNom, Page 2*



Jason Chang, left, director of UConn's Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, and Khamla Vorasane, proprietor of BouNom Bakery in Avon. COURTESY PHOTOS

## Troconis: State police manipulated evidence

Girlfriend of Fotis Dulos alleges arrest warrants 'contained falsehoods ... omitted material facts'

**By Edmund H. Mahony**

Hartford Courant

STAMFORD — Michelle Troconis's defense lawyer was in court Friday trying to persuade a judge that the state police manipulated evidence in order to obtain warrants for her arrest two years ago on charges that she helped her ex-boyfriend Fotis Dulos kill his wife and cover up evidence of the crime.

In what unfolded as an uphill legal fight, Troconis defense lawyer Jon Schoenborn argued to a Superior Court Judge Gary J. White that the warrants the state police prepared to arrest Troconis "contained falsehoods, recklessly disregarded the truth, and omitted material facts, that negated" the legal grounds for arrest.

Jennifer Farber Dulos disap-

peared in May 2019 and is presumed dead. State police detectives suspect, based on bloodstained car seats and other evidence collected through searches of locations across the state, that Dulos may have cut the body of his estranged wife and mother of his five children into pieces that have never been found.

Dulos was charged with murder in January 2020, but died in a New York City hospital a month later after trying to kill himself by carbon monoxide poisoning in the garage of a home on Jefferson Crossing in Farmington — a home he shared with Troconis after his wife disappeared. In the affidavits for her arrest, state police detectives accuse Troconis of conspiring with Dulos to murder his wife and later trying to help him avoid arrest by concealing evidence.

With Dulos dead, detectives believe the best hope of finding the remains of Farber Dulos lies with Troconis, who they claim changed her story and concealed facts during repeated interviews. She is free on a combined \$2.1 million bond and is accused,



Defense attorney Jon Schoenborn leaves Superior Court in Stamford with client Michelle Troconis after a hearing in February 2020.

*COURANT FILE*

*Turn to Troconis, Page 2*

## Vernon girl, 11, killed in fatal crash on I-84

**By Seamus McAvoy**

Hartford Courant

Police are investigating a fatal two-car crash on I-84 in Vernon Thursday that killed an 11-year-old girl.

According to police, the two vehicles involved were both traveling eastbound on the highway in the area of exit 67 at around 8 p.m. For unknown reasons, the front of a truck collided with the back of a passenger vehicle that was carrying the 11-year old and two others.

The 11-year-old was identified by police as Jaidyn Bolduc, a sixth-grader at Vernon Center Middle School. Bolduc was transported to Rockville General Hospital following the crash and was pronounced dead upon arrival.

The two other passengers, a 31-year-old woman and a 53-year-old woman, were taken to Hartford Hospital with suspected minor injuries, according to

police.

The driver of the truck, a 32-year-old man from Worcester, Massachusetts, was released from Rockville General Hospital.

The relationship between Bolduc and the other two women was not immediately clear, but police said they have the same home address in Vernon.

Joseph P. Macary, superintendent of schools, wrote in a statement that Bolduc was a kind, considerate student who was also involved in cheerleading. She was described by her teachers as a pleasure to have in class, he said.

"This is a terrible tragedy for the family and our community," Macary said. "Jaidyn will be sadly missed."

State police were joined by emergency responders from Vernon, Tolland and East Windsor departments at the scene.

Seamus McAvoy can be reached at [smcavoy@courant.com](mailto:smcavoy@courant.com)

**CONNECTICUT**

# Hallmark-inspired Avon Winterfest joins fun outdoor holiday festivities

**By Susan Dunne**  
Hartford Courant

In the 2021 Hallmark holiday movie "Taking a Shot at Love," a couple trying to save a Christmas tree farm visits the Avon Winterfest as their romance plays out. This weekend, film fiction comes to life as the Connecticut town of Avon hosts its inaugural three-day holiday fair inspired by that movie, starring Danica McKellar of "The Wonder Years."

Avon Winterfest will be on the Avon Village Green and village center Dec. 3-5.

"We had the idea to do something like it in 2019 but we couldn't get it up and running fast enough," said Dawn Zavalishin, director of Avon Winterfest. "Then in 2020 COVID hit. Then I was sitting at home watching the Hallmark movie that had an Avon Winterfest and it just all clicked."

Hallmark screenwriter and Avon resident Julie Sherman Wolfe set her movie in Avon, even though it was filmed in Canada.

"I'm always about hyping up Connecticut. That's my goal in general. You could call me the Connecticut hype man at Hallmark," Wolfe said. "I'm trying to build this little world."

The real Winterfest, to be emceed by NBC Connecticut newswoman Kerri-Lee Mayland, will have shopping opportunities, lollipop making, a beer garden,

caroling, food and drink vendors. The Hallmark movie "You, Me & The Christmas Trees," also set in Avon and written by Sherman, will be screened Dec. 3 from 8 to 10 p.m. in the parking lot of Whole Foods at 50 Climax Road.

Other activities and entertainments at family-friendly event include:

- Dec. 3: Fiddlers The Carroll Sisters at 6 p.m.; ice skating from 6 to 10 p.m.; Santa visits from 6 to 9 p.m.; opening ceremony at 6:30 p.m.; Avon High School Camerata Singers at 6:45 p.m.; a tree lighting at 7:30 p.m.; Sweet Adeline / Farmington Valley Chorus at 7:30 p.m.; the KC Sisters at 8:30 p.m.
- Dec. 4: Santa visits from 4 to 7 p.m.; ice skating from 6 to 10 p.m.; Avon Middle School Arioso Chorus at 5 p.m.; the KC Sisters at 6:30 p.m.; the Carroll Sisters at 8 p.m.
- Dec. 5: Ice skating from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; a gingerbread contest and raffle at 10 a.m.; Hilby the Skinny German Juggling Boy at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.; and The Substitutes at noon.

Proceeds will support Connecticut Children's Gastroenterology Department and Connecticut GI, PC, a medical group specializing in digestive and liver disorders. avonwinterfest.org.

## Other Winterfests

Other towns in Connecticut are

having Winterfests or other holiday-themed community get-togethers. Most activities are free of charge. Here is a list. It is not all-inclusive.

**Winterfest Hartford**, the annual outdoor series of free ice-skating days in Bushnell Park featuring music, Santa and seasonal activities, runs Friday to Jan. 9. Skating hours are daily from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., except on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, when the rink will be open noon to 4 p.m.; and on New Year's Eve, when the rink will be open 11 a.m. to midnight to coincide with First Night, downtown Hartford's annual New Year's Eve party. Other activities include free skating classes, Santa's workshops, a game room, the Hartford's Proud Drill Drum and Dance Corps. Chompers the Yard Goats mascot, and themed music nights. winterfesthartford.org.

**Ellington Winterfest** will be Dec. 4 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Dec. 5 from 2 to 4 p.m., on and near the town green. Activities include a play, "Christmas at Pine Tree Corners," by the Ellington High Opening Knight Players, choral concerts, ornament workshop, farmer's market, open houses at the library and Nellie McKnight Museum, bonfire, caroling, tree lighting, Santa, a torchlight parade, a café in the Congregational Church and a live nativity at the Latter-Day Saints church. Sched-



The West Hartford Holiday Stroll returned Thursday. COURTESY

ule and locations: facebook.com/townfellington.

**Tolland Chamber Singers** and the Stafford Madrigals will perform on Dec. 4 at 2:15 p.m. at the Hicks-Stearns Family Museum, 42 Tolland Green. The show will be followed by the tree lighting on the Green. facebook.com/hickssteans.

**Hello Holidays** will take place on Dec. 4 from 5 to 7 p.m. at The Promenade Shops at Evergreen Walk in South Windsor. Tree lighting, torch parade, decorated fire trucks, live music, dance performances, Santa visit. facebook.com/shopevergreenwalk/

**Night of Lights** will be at 1075 Main St. in Newington on Dec. 4 starting at 5 p.m. Activities include sleigh and train rides, fire trucks, live music, cocoa, carol singing, ice sculpting, a racing track, a bonfire with s'mores, a tree lighting and Santa visits. facebook.com/newingtonparksandrecreation.

**A Carol Sing and Torchlight Parade**, with holiday-lighted vehicles, will be Dec. 4 starting at 6 p.m. on the Windsor Town Green. firsttowndowntown.org.

**A Chanukah Village**, presented by Friendship Circle, is Dec. 5 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Chabad, 2352 Albany Ave. in West Hartford. There will be videos, karate, nail art, tattoos, latkes, LEGOs, dreidels, candle lighting, Chanukah songs. Wear an ugly Chanukah sweater. facebook.com/friendshipcirclect.

**The East Windsor Torchlight Parade** will be Dec. 18 starting at 5:30 p.m. on Main Street and ending at the Broad Brook Firehouse, where there will be hayrides, tattoos, arts and crafts, refreshments, carol singing, raffle and food collection for the needy. facebook.com/ewparksandrec.

Susan Dunne can be reached at [sdunne@courant.com](mailto:sdunne@courant.com).

**BouNom**

from Page 1

father Boulieng, or Bou for short, "were huge advocates of education. When we came to the U.S., over and over they would say education is so critical," Vorasane said. "They would be so honored to have a scholarship in their name that is able to give to somebody funds to get an education."

After the war, when Bou was sent to prison, soldiers came to their home.

"They seized our house, our dog, my mom's shop, everything we had," Vorasane said. The soldiers told Nom to follow them to a camp.

"Mom said her gut told her not to do it, not to follow them. So she snuck out with all of us. Later she found out all those people who followed them were killed," Vorasane said.

Nom lived in hiding with her five children. At first she scraped by, but later sold some of her jewelry to set up a small food business.

"I think we got our entrepreneurial spirit from her," Vorasane said.

When Bou was released, he made his way to Thailand and arranged for Nom and the kids to join him. The family crossed the Mekong River in the middle of the night. From Thailand, they moved to the United States, where they were granted asylum in 1980.

Bou and Nom raised their kids in Abilene, Texas. As the children grew up, Bou and Nom urged them to get good educations. Vorasane said scholarships, grants and loans funded her and her siblings' college studies. She has degrees from Texas Christian University in history and political science.

Vorasane and her sister, Chan Graham, founded the bakery BouNom in early 2020. In July 2021, Graham stepped back from the business and Vorasane took over in the kitchen, a transition

Vorasane described as "seamless."

This is not the family's first foray into philanthropy. About a year after BouNom opened, the bakery spent a day raising money for groups fighting anti-Asian discrimination. A total of \$4,000 was raised. The success of that effort inspired the scholarship initiative.

"After the news cycle stopped covering anti-Asian discrimination, we wanted to continue the dialogue, to make people aware of what Asian people of color go through on a daily basis," Vorasane said.

"If you ask people about Asian American history, all they know is that the Chinese came and built the railroads. We wanted a broader idea about how Asian Americans were an integral part of the growth of the United States."

The scholarship will be administered by UConn's Asian and Asian American Studies Institute. Jason Chang, director of the institute, said education majors who get the scholarship must enroll in classes in the university's Asian and Asian American Studies program.

"We'd like to see them in two classes," Chang said. The winners will be determined by an essay.

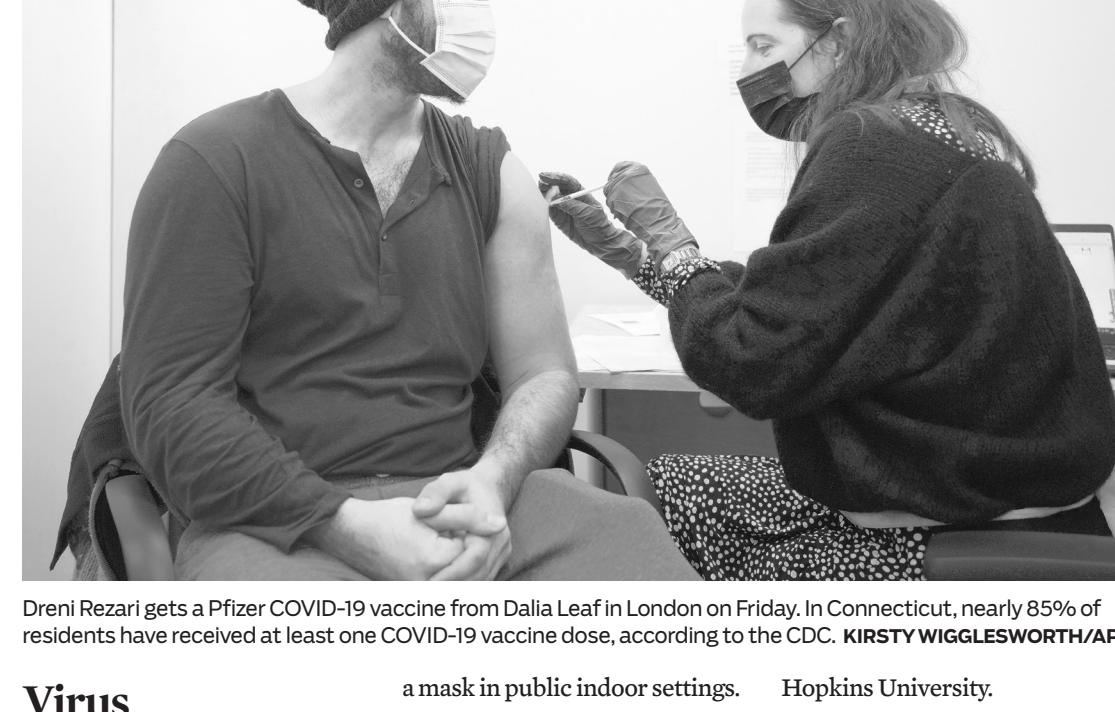
"They will write about their vision of contributing to the community through education," he said.

Chang said this is not the first scholarship offered by the institute, but it is the first that focuses on education rather than research.

The \$6,000 seed money to start the scholarship will fund three years' worth of \$2,000 awards, Vorasane said. The awards will continue after those three years if enough funds are raised.

Vorasane said BouNom will hold another fundraiser some time next year. To donate, visit [foundation.uconn.edu](http://foundation.uconn.edu)

Susan Dunne can be reached at [sdunne@courant.com](mailto:sdunne@courant.com).



Dreni Rezari gets a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine from Dalia Leaf in London on Friday. In Connecticut, nearly 85% of residents have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, according to the CDC. KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AP

**Virus**

from Page 1

the fact that 100% of the new cases in Connecticut are the delta variant."

**Cases and positivity rate:** Connecticut on Friday reported 863 new COVID-19 cases out of 16,268 tests administered, for a daily test positivity rate of 5.3%. The state's weekly positivity rate now stands at 5.63%, its highest point since Jan. 18.

All eight Connecticut counties — as well as the rest of those in the Northeast region — are currently recording "high" levels of COVID-19 transmission as defined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With this level of transmission, the CDC advises people to wear

a mask in public indoor settings.

Hopkins University.

**Hospitalizations:** As of Friday, there are 420 patients in Connecticut hospitalized with COVID-19, an increase of six individuals since Thursday. Hospitalizations are now at their highest point since April 27.

Hospital officials say the vast majority of those hospitalized with serious COVID-19 symptoms are unvaccinated.

**Deaths:** Connecticut reports additional COVID-19 deaths once a week, on Thursdays. This week, the state reported 44 additional COVID-19 deaths over the past eight days, bringing its total during the pandemic to 8,909.

The United States has now recorded 785,916 deaths related to COVID-19, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University.

**Vaccinations:** As of Thursday, 84.4% of all Connecticut residents and 94.6% of those 12 and older had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, while 72.2% of all residents and 82.6% of those 12 and older were fully vaccinated, according to the CDC.

Additionally, 26.7% of fully vaccinated Connecticut residents 18 or older have received a booster dose.

As of this month, all adults who received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine at least six months ago are now eligible for a booster shot, along with all adults who received a Johnson & Johnson vaccine at least two months ago.

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**Troconis**

from Page 1

among other things, of accompanying Dulos to Hartford the night after the murder while he stuffed bags of bloody evidence into storm drains and garbage cans.

Troconis has pleaded not guilty to all charges and insists she had nothing to do with the murder or cover-up. She did not attend the hearing in Stamford, which was devoted to legal questions about evidence collection, tampering crimes and the probable cause required for an arrest. Schoenhorn argued she should not have been arrested in the first place because he said detectives manipulated the facts in her arrest warrants.

Assistant state's attorney Daniel Cummings accused Schoenhorn of trying to capitalize on trivial inconsistencies and one factual error.

Even if a court were to remove the inconsistencies and errors pointed to by the defense, Cummings said the warrants would still be "team-ing with probable cause," meaning they contain more than enough evidence for a judge to order an arrest.

Schoenhorn and Cummings even disagreed on what legal remedy is available to Troconis, should White conclude at some point in the future that the arrest warrants are defective. Schoenhorn wants charges dismissed or, alternatively, evidence suppressed. Cummings said state courts have held that dismissal of charges is not a valid option.

White suggested to the lawyers, respectively, during the argument that it might be more appropriate for Troconis to attack the police arrest warrant affidavits before a jury during a trial than during a pretrial attempt to dismiss charges

or suppress evidence.

White did not rule on the evidence question and it appeared a resolution could be months away. White also ruled against Troconis by ordering in a separate matter that she must continue to wear an ankle monitor that tracks her location. Schoenhorn said Troconis now divides her time between Florida and Colorado and has been permitted to travel frequently while released on bond.

One point Schoenhorn returned to repeatedly during the hearing arose from the drive Troconis took with Dulos to Hartford apparently in an effort to dispose of bloody clothing and other evidence the night after Jennifer Farber Dulos disappeared. One of the Troconis arrest warrants charges that she was with Dulos in the truck that stopped 30 times on Albany Avenue while he got out to stuff bags of presumed evidence in

garbage cans and at least one storm drain.

Schoenhorn said his review of traffic camera video recordings collected by the police show the Dulos truck stopped only three times. What's more, he said Troconis never got out of the truck, was never recorded throwing anything away and told detectives she was preoccupied with a call on her cellphone. Troconis' claim that she was not aware that Dulos was hiding evidence sounds more plausible with only three stops rather than 30, Schoenhorn argued. He said a judge might have denied the arrest warrant had he known the truck stopped only three times.

Cummings said the number "thirty" was an inadvertent error made by police detectives who were rushing to gather evidence in hopes that Farber Dulos might be found alive in the days immediately following her disappearance.

He said the word "thirty" in the affidavit has been corrected to "multiple." In practical terms, Cummings said it didn't matter how many times the truck stopped. He said Troconis was with Dulos and had to have recognized he was acting oddly by driving from their Farmington home to Hartford to surreptitiously dump plastic bags in someone else's receptacles, hours after his wife disappeared.

"People involved in murder conspiracies don't invite spectators," Cummings said.

White permitted Schoenhorn on Friday to challenge two of the three arrest warrants issued for Troconis. The second warrant asserts that Troconis was present when Dulos was attempting to sanitize a pickup truck that may have been used in the murder.

Schoenhorn also is challenging several police searches of Troconis' home and possessions.



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**CONNECTICUT**

# Three charged in brazen Market 32 theft

Video of suspects allegedly stealing about \$1,700 worth of goods via shopping carts had gone viral

**By Seamus McAvoy**

Hartford Courant

State police on Thursday served arrest warrants on three suspects allegedly involved in the brazen theft of Market 32 in Oxford, which went viral in early November, and potentially other larcenies across the state.

Two of the suspects were already being held at Department of Corrections facilities on unrelated charges. The third suspect posted bond and is scheduled to appear in court in Derby on Dec. 6. All three were charged with fourth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fourth-de-

gree larceny.

On the morning of Nov. 9, a group of four people were seen loading shopping carts with laundry detergent and other high-value, low-volume merchandise into shopping carts. They then left the store without paying for the items, quickly loaded them into a pair of vehicles parked outside the store in the fire lane and fled the scene, police said. The group stole about \$1,700 worth of goods, according to court documents.

Despite the viral video posted to Facebook and YouTube capturing the theft, police said nobody called 911. The Oxford Resident Trooper's office wasn't made aware of

the incident until 10 minutes later, well after those involved had fled.

Oxford police obtained in-store surveillance footage of the incident on Nov. 10.

In the video, police identified a male and female suspect who were later seen loading merchandise into a tan Honda Odyssey minivan.

On Nov. 11, a man called the Oxford Resident State Trooper's office to report that he recognized the woman while watching video of the incident shown on local news. The woman lives in the same New Haven apartment complex, the man said, according to court documents, and the tan Honda minivan was parked nearby.

Oxford police traveled to the New Haven street where the van

was reported and found a vehicle with "undoubtable matching damage" to the one in the video of the incident. The van had identical damage to the door handle, passenger door and tire area on the front-passenger's side, police said in court documents.

Two more anonymous callers, fearing retaliation, later called police to say they recognized the people in the viral video of the incident because they live in the same apartment complex, according to court documents. The second anonymous caller recognized the tan minivan as well as the other car used in the theft, a tan Chevy Suburban.

On Nov. 15, police spoke with a "known associate" of the four people involved with the incident who identified them in the video.

According to court documents, the woman claimed the group is made up of two couples, some of whom have committed previous larcenies. The woman told police that one of the men involved was also responsible for the brazen theft of thousands of dollars worth of televisions from a BJ's in Wallingford, which was also captured on video.

Another witness shared screenshots of one of the identified suspects, sending a picture of over 100 bottles of laundry detergent for sale, police said.

Police have identified a fourth suspect, but said their identity has not been confirmed and a warrant has not yet been served.

*Seamus McAvoy can be reached at smcavoy@courant.com*

## Threat leads to school closure

Hamden High warned of 'potential gun violence' online

**By Seamus McAvoy**

Hartford Courant

Hamden High School was closed Friday while law enforcement investigated a threat of potential gun violence made against the school, officials said Thursday night.

Superintendent of Schools Jody Goeler said in a Tweet that the school was closing "out of an abundance of caution" to "allow police and administration to work together to investigate a threat made to the school."

School officials learned of a threat "regarding potential gun violence" at about 9:30 p.m. Thursday night, Hamden police said.

Police then launched an investigation into the threat, which they said was made online. Officials did not specify the online channel through which the threat was made.

The decision to close the school Friday was made by Hamden school officials, police and the office of Mayor Lauren Garrett, police said.

"I want to thank the Hamden Police Department and Hamden school officials for their swift response to ensure the safety of our students and staff," Garrett said in a statement Friday. "I am committed to the safety of our schools and I take every threat seriously."

"I applaud the students who were proactive about their safety and reached out to the police, administration, and parents about this threat," Garrett added.

Hamden police noted in a release that the department has increased its presence at the high school in recent weeks, and will continue to do so.

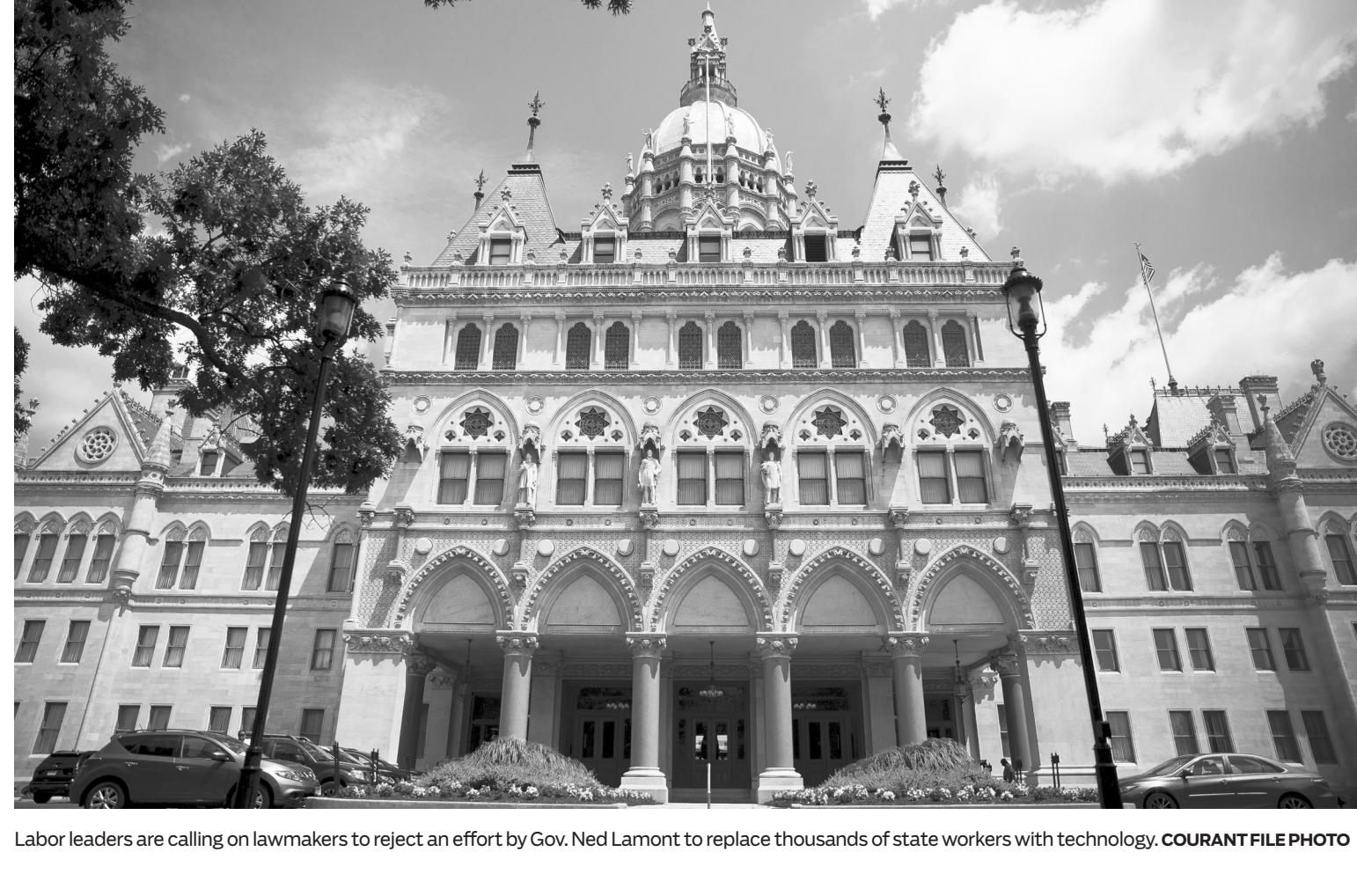
Two students were recently charged with assault following a violent altercation at a bus stop adjacent to campus on Monday. One of the students was hospitalized with multiple stab wounds; police said he was in stable condition on Tuesday.

In October, a Hamden High student was arrested on weapons charges for allegedly bringing a loaded handgun into school in his backpack.

The Special Victims Unit of the Hamden Police Department currently has an officer assigned to the high school as a school resource officer, in addition to a crisis services liaison officer, which started in 2018.

Anyone with more information is encouraged to contact Hamden police at 203-230-4000. Tips can remain confidential.

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Labor leaders are calling on lawmakers to reject an effort by Gov. Ned Lamont to replace thousands of state workers with technology. COURANT FILE PHOTO

## 'THIS IS A CROSSROADS'

Labor leaders urge Lamont to keep public-sector jobs in place ahead of new year

**By Keith Phaneuf**

CT Mirror

With 2022 looming as a watershed year, state employee unions and their allies are moving preemptively to stop Gov. Ned Lamont from accelerating the public sector's decline in Connecticut.

Labor leaders and their allies rallied Wednesday, urging lawmakers to reject an administrative effort to gradually replace thousands of state workers with technology — particularly while the coronavirus exacerbates the need for public services.

And with dozens of bargaining units entering or continuing contract negotiations in 2022, the coalition also urged state officials to support strong compensation increases for a workforce that endured considerable hardship and risk during the pandemic.

"This is a crossroads that we're in right now, and we're either going to have a robust recovery from the pandemic ... or we're going to fall flat," said David Glidden, executive director of CSEA-SEIU Local 2001, which represents about 4,000 state employees ranging from transportation planners, architects and engineers to information technology specialists and some Department of Education staff.

"And the key," Glidden added, "is investing in people, investing in services."

Sen. Saud Anwar, D-South Windsor, co-chairman of the legislature's Committee on Children, said the shortage of mental and behavioral health services for youth has reached crisis proportions in Connecticut, and the state workforce cannot afford to lose any caregivers in this field.

"The first step is going to be to make sure we provide support to

the existing workforce," Anwar said.

And while the need for workers in this field is acute, it is far from the only area of concern. More importantly, Anwar and other labor advocates added, these needs come at the worst possible time.

The state's workforce is trapped amid a perfect storm of pressures that have labor leaders worried.

Before the coronavirus struck here in March 2020, the state's executive branch workforce had undergone nearly a decade of decline that shrank its numbers by 10%.

Between 2011 and 2018, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and the General Assembly frequently relied on worker attrition to help close annual budget deficits, despite warnings from nonpartisan analysts and unions about insufficient staff in major departments, including Transportation and Correction.

The 2017 legislature also enacted a statute directing the governor to investigate another major contraction of the workforce, specifically by taking advantage of a huge surge in retirements projected for 2022 and 2023.

Comptroller Kevin P. Lembo's office estimates 12,500 state employees, roughly 25% of the workforce, will be eligible to retire in July 2022. And while Lembo is not projecting that many actually will leave their jobs, that pool of potentials is far greater than the 2,185 workers — on average — who retired annually between 2017 and 2021.

Lamont, who took office in January 2019, hired the Boston Consulting Group in the fall of 2020 to carry out the 2017 legislature's directive. Boston Consulting crafted a strategy to gradually cut annual personnel costs by \$500 million by the

mid-2020s, largely by using new technologies to replace retirees across a wide variety of occupations.

The State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition, which includes most major unions in state government, has pushed workers not to cooperate with this venture and has urged lawmakers to reverse course.

"The Lamont administration did not create the retirement cliff," Max Reiss, the governor's communications director, said Wednesday. It also didn't create the workforce downsizing trend that began a decade ago or the long-term pension debt that drove this effort.

"What the Lamont administration has been doing is coming up with ways to ensure our residents won't see any disruption of service," Reiss said, adding that the planned transition also could improve the efficiency of many services.

Lamont proposed modest staffing savings in the budget he presented to legislators last February. And with the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, the administration has said the effort to streamline the state's workforce may have to progress more slowly — but will still continue.

But the coming year also marks a state election cycle, and Lamont, a Greenwich Democrat who is running for reelection, is expected to seek strong support from labor again as he did in his 2018 campaign.

And while labor leaders say this workforce streamlining initiative was and remains fundamentally flawed and will weaken services, they add that the dangers it poses have been magnified since the coronavirus hit Connecticut.

The pandemic has placed unprecedented strains on health care, social services and education, labor leaders said. Connecticut

also has struggled for decades with economic development and transportation, and COVID-19 has left many segments of the state's economy in weak shape.

According to the Department of Labor, Connecticut still has about 45,000 filers receiving weekly unemployment benefits.

The Recovery For All CT coalition, a grassroots team of labor- and faith-based organizations — including many SEBAC members — is fighting to preserve public services in all areas.

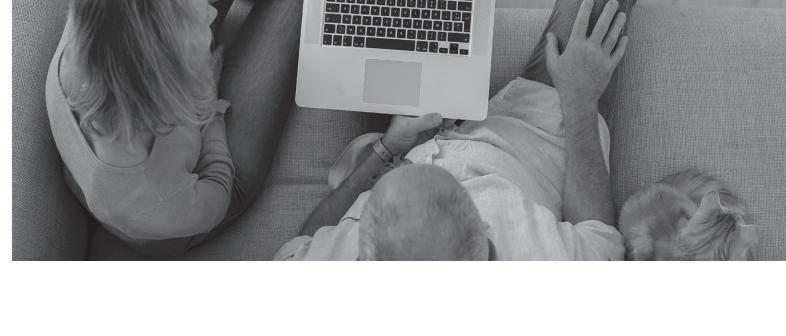
Puya Gerami, the coalition's executive director, said these services can't be preserved if public-sector jobs are lost. And after state workers in health care, education, social services, transportation, public safety and prisons and so many other groups risked their lives simply by going to work over the past year-and-a-half, preserving jobs means providing good compensation.

"We believe that state workers sacrificed everything to keep this state afloat and are still sacrificing everything during this ongoing pandemic," he added. "These are the folks who are working in the most significant conditions."

Reiss responded that while the Lamont administration won't negotiate labor contracts through the news media, the governor has said on several occasions that front-line workers who had to show up for work despite the risks of coronavirus should be properly compensated.

"We absolutely respect and will listen to our partners in organized labor," Reiss said.

*Keith Phaneuf is a reporter for The Connecticut Mirror ([ctmirror.org](http://ctmirror.org)). Copyright 2021 © The Connecticut Mirror.*



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**LIVING****CELEBRITIES**

## Lovato: 'Sober sober' only way to be

From news services

Demi Lovato is changing their sober ways.

"I no longer support my 'California sober' ways," the singer wrote in their Instagram Stories Thursday, referencing their previous policy that allowed marijuana use and the occasional drink in a relatively substance-free lifestyle.

"Sober sober is the only way to be," they continued.

The singer, 29, almost died in the summer of 2018 after overdosing and being treated with Narcan, used to counteract opioids.

Lovato revealed in February that the overdose brought on three strokes and a heart attack, and said doctors guessed they had "five to 10 more minutes" to live when they got to the hospital. After a two-week stay there, Lovato entered an in-patient rehab facility.

The singer said in March that they struggle with tinnitus, can't drive and can't see a person's mouth or nose when looking at them directly.

In that same interview, Lovato told Glamour that an all-or-nothing approach to sobriety in the wake of their OD wouldn't work, because they were trying to recover from an eating disorder and tackling sobriety simultaneously. The singer left the door open to having a drink or smoking marijuana.

"When I ignore and deny myself of my truth, I get angry, and I overflow, and I make choices that are really bad for me," Lovato said. "If I look in the mirror and present the mirror with something I'm not, it will shatter."

**Williams seen exiting wellness center:** Wendy Williams has been spotted out and about. Despite unsubstantiated reports that the ailing talk show host was using a wheelchair and showing signs of



Demi Lovato, seen Sept. 25, says they no longer support their "California Sober" ways. MICHAEL TRAN/GTY-AFP

dementia, she appears to be doing well.

Amid an indefinite hiatus from her nationally syndicated daily show to seek treatment for her ongoing health issues, Williams was caught on video barefoot and wearing a red robe as she exited a Miami wellness facility and made her way to an SUV flanked with a team of unidentified people.

The daytime diva, 57, isn't commenting about the status of her Emmy Award-nominated talk show but did say "thank you" when the paparazzi said "everyone does hope you feel better" in the clip.

"Wendy is doing fabulous" is how she responded in third person when asked about her recovery, urging her fans to look forward to "lots more Wendy stuff."

**Griffin cancer free:** Comedian Kathy Griffin is "so cancer free" and speaks a few octaves higher now.

The formerly embattled

comedian said in August that she had been diagnosed with stage 1 lung cancer and had to have half of her lung removed.

"I had surgery, you're not going to believe this. So, I've never smoked, but I got lung cancer. In August, I had half of my left lung removed," she said during a recent appearance on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!"

"They put the intubation tube too rough on my vocal cord, so now I'm like Minnie Mouse meets Marilyn Monroe," she joked. Griffin said that her voice will heal.

**Dec. 4 birthdays:** Host Wink Martindale is 88. Singer Freddy "Boom Boom" Cannon is 85. Actor Max Baer Jr. is 84. Actor Jeff Bridges is 72. Actor Patricia Wettig is 70. Singer Cassandra Wilson is 66.

Actor Marisa Tomei is 57. Comedian Fred Armisen is 55. Rapper Jay-Z is 52. Model Tyra Banks is 48. Actor Orlando Brown is 34.



## ASK AMY

By Amy Dickinson

askamy@amydickinson.com Twitter@askingamy

### Car sale goes sideways, friend's feelings follow

**Dear Amy:** My best friend's mother can no longer drive, so they are selling her car.

I asked her how much they were asking for the car. The reply: "For you, \$500." I said, "Consider it sold. I will buy it for my daughter."

I called my daughter to go over and test drive it. She did and got the VIN number to get the insurance on the vehicle before she picked it up.

My girlfriend asked her to come get the car Friday.

However, my daughter got very sick Friday and went to the doctor. She was in terrible pain and went back to the doctor Saturday. The doctor thinks she has kidney stones.

I got a text from my friend saying she hadn't heard from my daughter. I explained that she was very sick. I asked if it could wait until next week and she said, "Sure." My daughter was moving and had to be out of her place by Sunday. While I agree that a phone call from her to explain would have been nice, I'm sure she just forgot.

Then my friend texted me that she still hadn't heard from her Saturday or Sunday morning. She called me Sunday night, saying that they decided not to sell the car, after all.

Now I feel slighted.

My daughter is still sick, and I feel bad.

How do I get over this?

— Stuck in Reverse

**Dear Stuck:** When they agreed to sell this car to you, after the test drive you should have then paid them promptly and closed the deal. You don't seem to have done that.

If you had paid for the car, then your daughter's valid excuses for not taking possession wouldn't have mattered as much, and they would not have been able to take back their offer.

As it is, the delays gave the family time to reconsider their choice, and because the car still belonged to them, they exercised their right to change their minds. Your friend then notified you promptly, which was the right thing to do.

You should chalk this up to a case of unfortunate timing and do your best to move on.

**Dear Amy:** I had some truly dear friends for over 10 years who were with me through good times and bad. They moved away. I try to keep in touch, but I find that I am always the one to initiate contact; they never make the first move to call or send a text.

While I love these friends dearly, I can't help but wonder if they were "seasonal" friends, and now it's time for me to move on.

Should I communicate my feelings, or just let things go and be grateful for the good times we had?

— Lost in LA

**Dear Lost:** The most important aspect of this dilemma is how you feel when you communicate with these friends. Do you sense that they are delighted to hear from you? Do they take an interest in your updates? Do they follow a phone call from you with a text telling you how nice it was to catch up?

My point is that some

people don't ever seem to initiate, for a variety of reasons — some of which have nothing to do with how they feel about you. Something as simple as a time zone difference can throw people off.

You can certainly tell them: "I love catching up with you, but I always make the first move. It's pretty frustrating, and I'm trying not to take it personally."

This sort of statement doesn't terminate the friendship, but opens the door for them to acknowledge, apologize and make an effort to get back on track with you.

After that, you can go quiet if you want to, knowing that you've stated your case, without guiltling them into a corner.

**Dear Amy:** In your response to "Good Auntie," who was wondering how to address their non-binary family member, you missed an educational lesson when you stated "... and loves her nieces and nephews without harsh judgment — just as they are." Unfortunately, you only used gendered identifiers.

The gender-neutral term for "the child of one's sibling" is "nibling."

— We Learn Something New Every Day

**Dear Every Day:** During moments like this, my late mother would often wonder aloud: "Have I lived too long?" Thank you for the lesson.

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**MUSIC REVIEW**

## Snail Mail turns heartbreak into a spectacular album

By Lindsay Zoladz

The New York Times

Lindsey Jordan is far from the first person to have her heart broken, but "Valentine," her remarkable second album as Snail Mail, is alive with such crackling and revelatory emotion that for about 32 minutes it allows you to suspend disbelief and imagine — well, what if she is?

"Why'd you wanna erase me, darling valentine?" Jordan snarls on the lead-off title track, a song that careens with the precarious dynamism of a carnival thrill ride. Repeated plays won't prepare listeners for how wonderfully loud the chorus gets, how suddenly and furiously the song shifts from a brooding, synth-driven sulk to an all-out temper tantrum of the heart.

"You always know where to find me when you change your mind," she adds, and when is the operative word. This album's narrative arc is shaped like a dizzying spin through the Kübler-Ross stages of grief, and the opener captures the precise moment that denial billows into a conflagration of hot anger.

Jordan was 18 when she released the debut Snail Mail album, "Lush," and it established her (alongside artists such as Soccer Mommy and Vagabon) as a crucial voice in a new wave of young women making feelings-forward, guitar-driven indie rock. (Although she started it as a solo project, Snail Mail is now a trio featuring bassist Alex Bass and drummer Ray Brown.)

"Lush," although searching and potent, was often about unrequited crushes and unconsummated yearning.

On the single "Heat



**'Valentine'**  
Snail Mail (Matador)

Wave," Jordan offered a quintessential Snail Mail blessing to a person identified by the adoring nickname "Green Eyes": "I hope the love that you find swallows you wholly."

Such obliqueness made sense; Jordan was still quite young, and her processes of self-discovery and uncovering her sexuality both found expression in her songwriting.

"I was always a huge fan of songs about women," she told The New York Times in 2018. "So when I discovered that was who I was predominantly interested in, I was like, can't wait to just start writing songs about women."

More explicitly than "Lush," though, "Valentine" is unequivocally an album about women loving women — as well as women leaving women, and women occasionally trying to numb heartbreak via dalliances with rebound women.

"Sometimes I hate her just for not being you," Jordan, now 22, admits on the slinky single "Ben Franklin," a song that finds her feigning a blasé attitude but almost immediately folding and admitting that she's a "sucker for the pain."

On the sharply affecting "Automate," which lurches uneasily forward like someone fumbling for a light switch, Jordan paints

a piercing picture with a few simple words: "Red lips, dark room, I pretend it's you, but she kissed like she meant it."

Jordan's voice has changed since "Lush"; it's become hoarse, feral and absolutely heartbreaking. She often sounds like she's just been crying or maybe still is, and "Valentine" gives off the overwhelming effect that you are listening to someone moving through feelings in real time — that the album itself is an immediate expression of raw, unprocessed grief.

"When did you start seeing her?" Jordan asks on the breathtaking "Headlock," a perfect distillation of the step forward that "Valentine" represents in all aspects of Jordan's songwriting: clear, direct language and wrenching melody used in the service of vivid emotional truths. "Thought I'd see her when I died," Jordan sings, briefly flirting with oblivion, "Filled the bath up with warm water, nothing on the other side."

By the final song, "Mia," though, Jordan will have begged, bargained, languished and at last begun to accept reality.

"Gotta grow up now, no I can't keep holding on to you anymore," she sings, while a subtle string arrangement creeps in like the first glimmers of sunlight after a storm.

Jordan's ability to feel everything so deeply is what previously made her feel like she was dying, but by the end of the album she shows it's also what has given her the strength to move on with her life.

As "Valentine" so poignantly illustrates, the surest route out of a terrible feeling is straight through its bleeding heart.

## HOROSCOPES

Tarot.com

**Aries (March 21-April 19):**

The world is opening up to you in radical ways. It's time to start thinking about ways to take your life beyond your own backyard. You have a wonderful opportunity to enrich your mind and grow toward a new way of life.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20):**

You're being called to shed your old skin and dive into the fire, only to reemerge like the phoenix. Build a better version of yourself. Whether it's mistakes or doubts that are holding you back, identify them, then release them. A powerful new version of you is waiting to arise.

**Gemini (May 21-June 20):**

The most important relationships in your life could experience major changes. These changes could be for better or for worse. You might experience tremendous growth with someone, or you could realize that you're lacking freedom. Whatever occurs, it's probably for the better.

**Cancer (June 21-July 22):**

What happens in your day-to-day life could change starting today. You could feel a strong urge to free yourself from your current job or start a new wellness regimen. Something may come along that pushes you into these changes. Have faith that it's all part of the universe's intentions.

**Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):**

How your money comes and goes becomes a major focus starting today. It's a great time to make changes. Thinking about what you want your financial status to look like years down the road can help you understand the decisions you should be making in the here and now.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):**

A powerful moment of release is upon you. This is rather strange. The best way to make use of this energy is to look around your life and decide what belongs in the past or no longer serves you. Clear out the clutter and you'll be in a much better position to receive the future.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):**

Good news is coming your way.

This is a beautiful opportunity to make a wish and see it come to fruition in the months ahead. If there's a special person you feel a secret spark for, now is the time to muster up your confidence and turn a spotlight toward your passion.

**Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):**

Changes at home might finally come to full fruition today. You now have a chance to bring things full-circle. Performing a major renovation, adding a member to your family, or finding a whole new place to live are all possibilities. Bring fresh energy to your household.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):**

Polish up that silver tongue, because today brings communication and information! You might feel like there's more going on than usual, stimulating your mind and giving you plenty of things to say. It's a great time to work on your methods of communicating.

**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20):**

This could be one of the best days you'll encounter for your career for a long time, so don't sit back and let it pass you by! Put real intention into considering the next step you'd like to take professionally, because this is a powerful time of beginnings and you have a real shot at making things happen.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):**

Your connection to others is the main focus today. You're being called on to consider the people you associate with and if they are the right people for you. You might find that new friendships are made while some alliances begin to fade. This is your green light to start socializing.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):**

This is a very important day for you, Sagittarius. A new moon acts like rocket fuel for you, blasting you into a new and improved phase of life. Think about the experiences you'd like in your life, and know that the universe is working to take you where you are meant to be.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):**

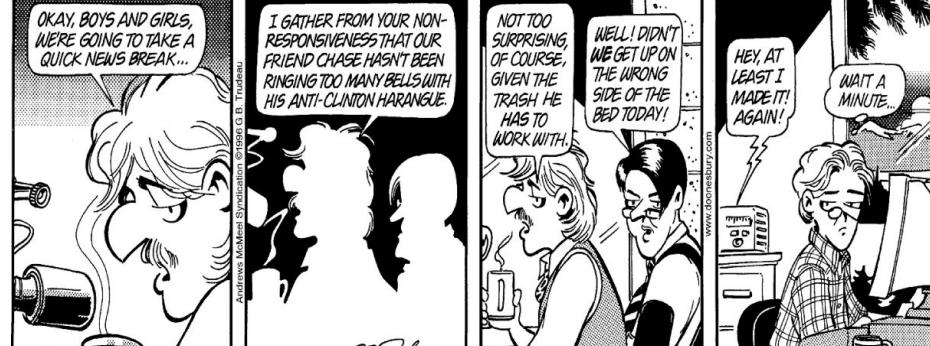
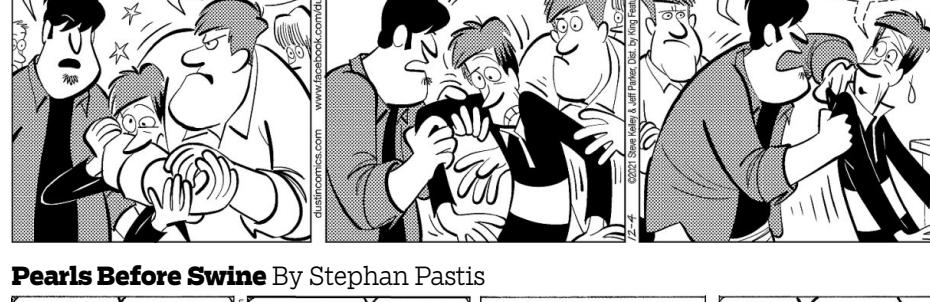
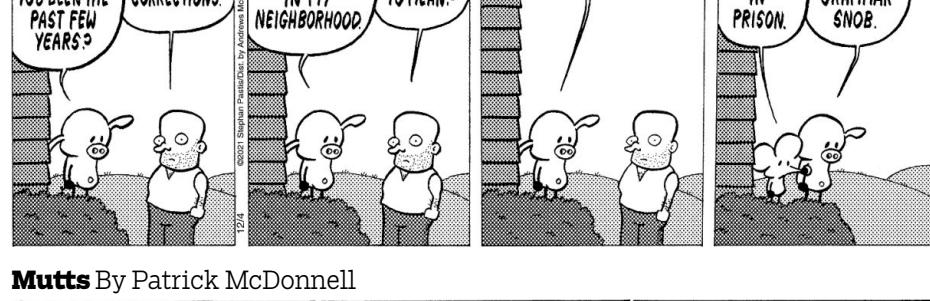
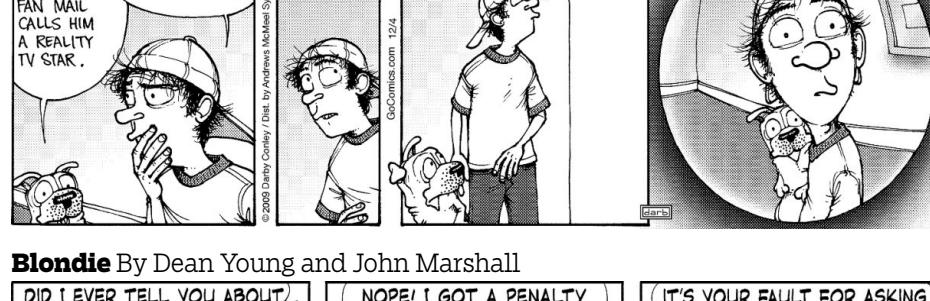
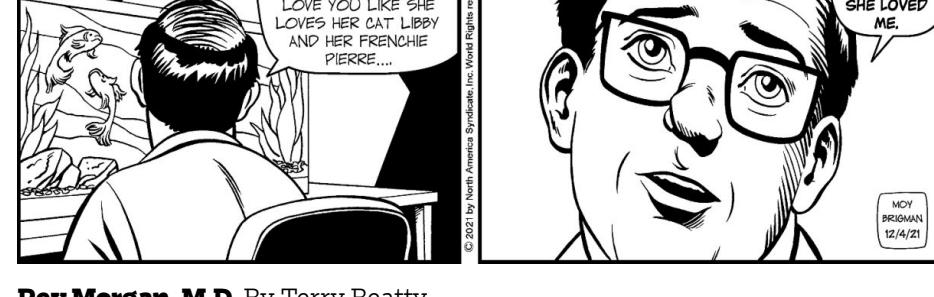
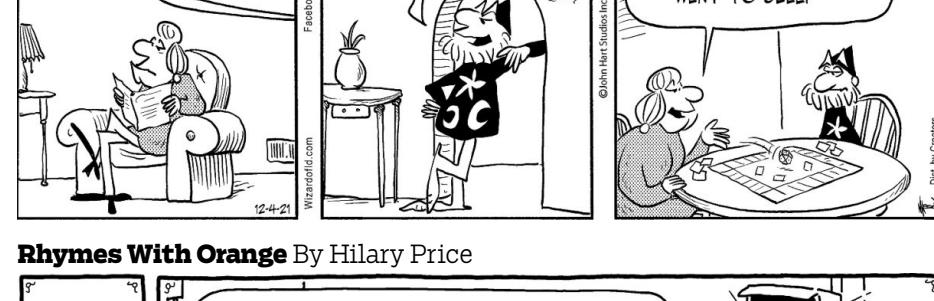
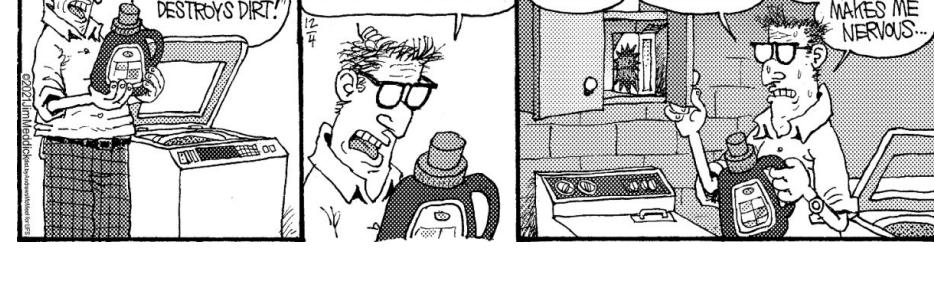
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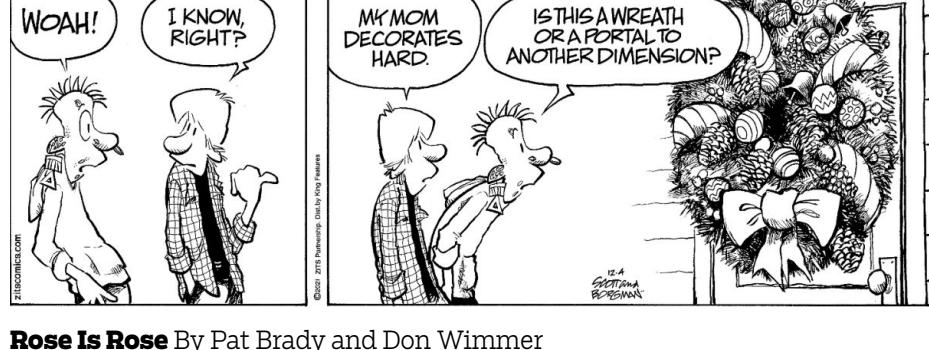
release is upon you. This is rather strange. The best way to make use of this energy is to look around your life and decide what belongs in the past or no longer serves you. Clear out the clutter and you'll be in a much better position to receive the future.

**Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):**

How your money comes and goes becomes a major focus starting today. It's a great time to make changes. Thinking about what you want your financial status to look like years down the road can help you understand the decisions you should be making in the here and now.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):**</p

**Peanuts** By Charles M. Schulz**Classic Doonesbury** By Garry Trudeau**Garfield** By Jim Davis**Shoe** By Gary Brookins & Susie MacNelly**Dustin** By Steve Kelley & Jeff Parker**Pearls Before Swine** By Stephan Pastis**Mutts** By Patrick McDonnell**Arctic Circle** By Alex Hallatt**Jump Start** By Robb Armstrong**Get Fuzzy** By Darby Conley**Blondie** By Dean Young and John Marshall**Dilbert** By Scott Adams**Gil Thorp** By Neal Rubin and Frank McLaughlin**Mary Worth** By Karen Moy and June Brigman**Rex Morgan, M.D.** By Terry Beatty**Judge Parker** By Woody Wilson and Mike Manley**Baldo** By Cantu and Castellanos**Funky Winkerbean** By Tom Batiuk**Lio** By Mark Tatulli**Wizard Of Id** By Johnny Hart and Brant Parker**Rhymes With Orange** By Hilary Price**Monty** By Jim Meddick

**For Better Or For Worse** By Lynn Johnston**B.C.** By Hart**Beetle Bailey** by Mort, Greg & Brian Walker**Hi & Lois** By Greg and Brian Walker and Chance Browne**Hagar The Horrible** By Chris Browne**Non Sequitur** By Wiley Miller**Curtis** By Ray Billingsley**Pickles** By Brian Crane**Zits** By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman**Rose Is Rose** By Pat Brady and Don Wimmer**Mother Goose And Grimm** By Mike Peters**CROSSWORD**

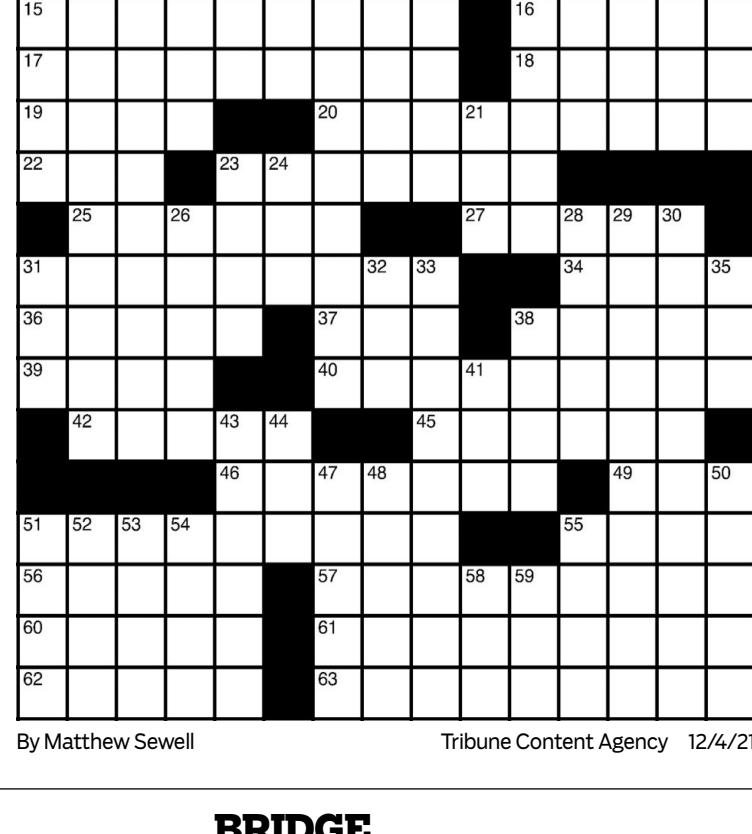
EDITED BY RICH NORRIS AND JOYCE NICHOLS LEWIS

**Across**

- 1 Applies sustained effort  
10 HS course that may be lit?  
16 Ambitious sort  
17 Bean, e.g.  
18 Twist  
19 City on Presque Isle Bay  
20 Audio engineer's accoutrements  
22 Hold back  
23 Low-carb alternative to oats  
25 Princess Margaret portrayer in "The Crown"  
27 \_\_\_ act  
31 Anticlimactic happenings  
34 Bob Odenkirken title role  
36 Umbilicus formation  
37 \_\_\_ the People: razor brand  
38 Gulf of Guinea capital  
39 Neuron speed unit: Abbr.  
40 Movie monster term meaning "alien form"  
42 Zoom sesh, e.g.  
45 Protective legwear  
46 Atsukan, at a sushi bar  
49 Quick swim  
51 Idaho has the only one designed by a woman  
55 Italian university city  
56 Old orange-roofed
- eateries, for short  
57 Reggie Jackson nickname  
60 Big name in gaming  
61 Charades skill  
62 Whammies  
63 Rapt
- 10 Whenever one wants  
11 Instrument depicted on Keats' gravestone  
12 Sprawling tale  
13 Nobelist Cassin  
14 Handles  
21 \_\_\_-12  
23 "The Craft" actress Campbell  
24 Paris article  
26 German camera brand  
28 Dandy accessory  
29 Bird mummified by ancient Egyptians  
30 "You pick"  
31 Nice handle?  
32 Col. on a planner  
33 Folk music gathering, often  
35 "Well, \_\_\_-di-dah!"  
38 BFF of Brittany  
41 Whiskey barrel wood  
43 Grad school hurdle  
44 Aurora counterpart  
47 Home of Arizona State  
48 That's a wrap  
50 Clipped  
51 Persian for "king"  
52 Subscriber's bonus  
53 Mighty warrior of myth  
54 Bolted  
55 Little dogs, briefly  
58 Lisa Leslie's WNBA position  
59 Moreover

**Down**

- 1 Shook one's hand?  
2 Sydney attraction  
3 Strictly organized  
4 Hacky Sacker's option  
5 Ice-T's "SVU" rank  
6 Following  
7 Yak  
8 Major religion of Indonesia  
9 "Finished!"



By Matthew Sewell

Tribune Content Agency 12/4/21

**BRIDGE**

BY STEVE BECKER

West dealer.  
Neither side vulnerable.**NORTH**

♦ 10 8 7 6 2

♥ 10 9 3

♦ A 8

♣ A K Q

**WEST**

♠ A K Q J 9

♦ 8 7 6 2

♥ 9 6 4

♣ 5

**EAST**

♠ 4

♦ 5

♥ K J 10 7 5 3

♣ 10 9 6 4 3

**SOUTH**

♠ 5 3

♦ A K Q J 4

♥ Q 2

♣ J 8 7 2

The bidding:

West North East South

Pass 1 ♠ Pass 2 ♥

Pass 3 ♡ Pass 4 ♦

Opening lead — king of spades.

**Fancy footwork**

Assume you're in four hearts and West leads the K-A-Q of spades, East discarding the 7-5 of diamonds on the second and third spades. You ruff, expecting to cash your 10 high-card tricks and move onto the next deal.

But when you play the A-K of trump, East shows out, and complications suddenly arise.

You still have those same 10 tricks — five hearts, four clubs and a diamond — but how can you possibly cash them? If you draw West's two remaining trumps and play the A-K-Q of clubs, how do you get back to your hand to cash the jack of clubs?

And if instead you stop drawing trump at this juncture and try to cash the A-K-Q of clubs first, West is virtually certain to ruff one of them to defeat you.

West has already shown up with five spades and four hearts and can hardly have

three clubs also, which would mean East started with eight diamonds.

The problem seems insoluble, and yet the answer is there if you examine all the evidence. The fact is that West passed as dealer with the A-K-Q-J-9 of spades and therefore cannot have the king of diamonds.

So, acting on this deduction, you continue with the Q-J of trump and discard the ace of diamonds from dummy! Next you cash dummy's A-K-Q of clubs and then lead the eight of diamonds toward your Q-2.

Regardless of what East does or has done to this point, he cannot stop you from scoring two more tricks with the queen of diamonds and jack of clubs, and you are back to making the 10 tricks you started with.

**JUMBLE**

BY DAVID HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

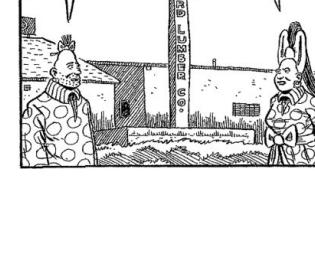
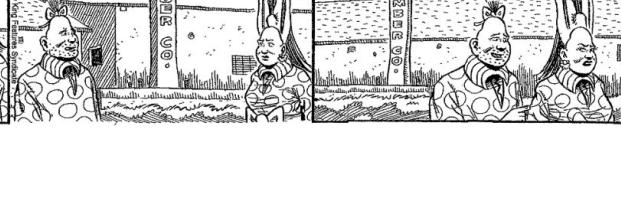
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print your answer here:  -   
(Answers Monday)Yesterday's Jumbles: GOURD SUNNY ENTICE RADIAL  
Answer: The subway was running late, and not everyone was UNDERSTANDING**TODAY'S SUDOKU**

8			2					
9	5		7		3			
6					5			
1		5		9	7			
2	1		4	6				
4	9	3	1					
						1		
1	4	3						
		8			4			

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [www.sudoku.org.uk](http://www.sudoku.org.uk).**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS CROSSWORD PUZZLE**DOLL'S KNIT YOS  
ENIAC ROKU MART  
ELFCABARET OSLO  
DYEL LIU ANGEL  
CATS APPAUSE  
RARE SLEEPERS  
OPINES LATH  
BROADWAY SMASHES  
MISTRAL IGGY  
WICKED DFROZEN  
IDEES WIN SUV  
NOME HAIRGREASE  
DRAT OBOE OWNER  
YIN PENS NEEDY**"HAIRWARE PROBLEM"**

**Motoring Inside****Hartford Courant****SPORTS****COURANT.COM/SPORTS****UCONN FOOTBALL****School was aware of Mora lawsuits before hiring****By Dom Amore**

Hartford Courant

Before hiring Jim Mora as head coach for the UConn football team, the university acknowledged that it was aware of four lawsuits filed against Jim Mora, his coaching staff and UCLA during his tenure as Bruins head coach from 2012-17.

"We were aware of the matter early on during the process," UConn said in a statement. "We have confirmed that the plaintiff(s)

has dropped Coach Mora's name as a defendant from this case [in November]."

Three former UCLA players, John Lopez, Poasi Moala and Zach Bateman, filed lawsuits on May 28, 2019, against the Regents of the University of California, the NCAA, UCLA assistant coach Adrian Klemm, associate trainer Anthony Venute and Mora.

The players were each seeking in excess of \$15 million in damages according to a 2019 report by the

Los Angeles Times.

The Bruins players alleged that the coaching staff mishandled their injuries during their time at the university. Lopez and Moala suffered multiple concussions while at UCLA, and Bateman had foot injuries he claimed were treated with negligence.

A fourth suit was brought in September 2019 by offensive lineman Kenny Lacy, who had a hip injury and was seeking unspecified damages.

Lopez's suit alleges he was pressured back into football activities after suffering concussions in 2013 and 2014 during training camp, that he was ridiculed after his first concussion and that practices included "unnecessarily brutal" head-to-head contact drills. Lopez suffered another concussion in 2015 and was forced stop playing football. His suit contends he was left with short-term memory loss, depression and anxiety, and that he attempted suicide in 2016 by

overdosing on a combination of over-the-counter and prescription medications. He claims his injuries have kept him from finishing school.

Moala's suit alleges that he suffered from multiple concussions and hip injuries that required two surgeries before ending his college career in 2017. According to the lawsuits, coaches did not take his complaints seriously.

**Turn to Mora, Page 4**

**NO. 2 UCONN WOMEN 74, SETON HALL 49**

UConn guard Christyn Williams drives to the basket past Seton Hall guard Katie Armstrong in the first half Friday. Williams scored 17 points on 8-for-16 shooting. NOAH K. MURRAY/AP

**Escape from New Jersey**

UConn wins Big East opener, but Bueckers' 'terrific' performance is needed to secure win

**By Alexa Philipou**

Hartford Courant

SOUTH ORANGE, N.J. — It wasn't pretty, but the No. 2 UConn women's basketball team started conference play with a win Friday in South Orange, defeating the Seton Hall Pirates, 74-49.

Sophomore Paige Bueckers led the Huskies (4-1, 1-0 Big East) with 23 points on 11-for-18 shooting, along with nine rebounds,

seven assists, five steals and zero turnovers, a "terrific" performance according to coach Geno Auriemma. Senior guard Christyn Williams scored 17.

UConn's frontcourt dominated, with Aaliyah Edwards finishing with a season-high 12 points and seven rebounds (three offensive, three times more than she had all season entering this game).

"She worked harder than she has in any game this season, and the results speak for themselves," Auriemma said.

Dorka Juhasz added five points and 10 rebounds, while Olivia Nelson-Ododa also notched a season-high 10 points.

The Huskies' bested the Pirates

on the board, 48-30, and in the paint 50-12.

"You have very few requirements if you're a big guy playing basketball: don't give up layups and offensive rebound and set good screens," Auriemma said. "And then if you can make shots, phew, that's awesome."

Lauren Park-Lane (20 points) was the top scorer for Seton Hall (3-3, 0-1).

UConn looked sluggish out of the gate, with six first-quarter turnovers and mediocre shooting, while the Pirates came out firing with some early 3s. The Huskies trailed the Pirates 17-16 at the end of the first, with Bueckers' nine points keeping the Huskies close

and Edwards' putback briefly giving them the lead at the 1:13 mark.

UConn turned things around to start the second, using a 12-2 run to retake the lead and force a Seton Hall timeout. It was a balanced effort, with six Huskies scoring in the frame, and was made possible by the team's strong defense. The Pirates shot just 2 for 14, committed five turnovers and scored just six points, allowing UConn to go into the break up, 39-23.

The Huskies faltered on both ends in the third, only narrowly outscoring the Pirates 14-13, but Williams' take to the hoop before

**Turn to UConn, Page 4**

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL****His new Kentucky home: Xavier's Levis had quite a year in Lexington****Dom Amore**

Nutritionists will tell you Will Levis is on to something. Banana peels, high in fiber, potassium and essential amino

acids might be worth a try.

But mayonnaise in coffee?

Hard pass.

"Hey, I'm just having fun," Levis says. "I'm a college kid. It isn't hurting anybody, and through my social media I like to show that personal side of me the average fan doesn't get to see on game day or in press conferences."

The first of the viral posts came

in August. Levis, who is from Madison and Xavier High, having transferred from Penn State, was fighting for the starting quarterback job at Kentucky.

He posted a 56-second video on TikTok where he chomps down on a very ripe banana, skin and all. "I don't fear the brown spots, they fear me," was its caption.

More than 50,000 views later,

Levis was a TikTok star, pouring

blue Powerade on his Honey Nut Cheerios for an encore.

In yet another video, his girlfriend, Gia Duddy, offers him creamers for his morning coffee and he declines. "So you drink it black?" she asks. "Not quite," he answers, then picks up a container of mayonnaise, squirts some in and drinks up.

**Turn to Amore, Page 2**

**Today's game**

**Grambling at UConn**

4 p.m., FS2

**Safety Tip of the Day**

Expecting a storm? Be sure to inspect the trees on your property for cracks in tree trunks or major limbs, limbs extending over a roof, or trees in close proximity to power lines.



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## SPORTS

### UP NEXT

**Patriots:** at Bills, Monday, 8:15 p.m.  
**Giants:** at Dolphins, Sunday, 1 p.m.  
**Jets:** Eagles, Sunday, 1 p.m.  
**UConn MBB:** Grambling State (Gampel), Saturday, 4 p.m.; Big East-Big 12 Battle: at West Virginia, Wednesday, 7 p.m.; Never Forget Tribute Classic: vs. St. Bonaventure (Newark, N.J.), Dec. 11, 3:30 p.m.  
**UConn WBB:** Notre Dame (Gampel), Sunday, noon; at Georgia Tech, Thursday, 7 p.m.; vs. UCLA (Never Forget Classic, at Newark, N.J.), Dec. 11, 1 p.m.  
**Celtics:** at Trail Blazers, Saturday, 10 p.m.; at Lakers, Tuesday, 10 p.m.; at Clippers, Wednesday, 10:30 p.m.  
**Knicks:** Nuggets, Saturday, 1 p.m.; at Spurs, Tuesday, 8:30 p.m.; at Pacers, Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
**Nets:** Bulls, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; at Mavericks, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.; at Houston, Wednesday, 8 p.m.  
**UConn hockey:** Merrimack, Saturday, ppd, COVID-19; at AIC, Thursday, 7 p.m.; AIC, Dec. 11, 3 p.m.  
**Bruins:** Lightning, Saturday, 7 p.m.; at Canucks, Wednesday, 9 p.m.; at Oilers, Thursday, 9 p.m.  
**Rangers:** Blackhawks, Saturday, 8 p.m.; at Blackhawks, Tuesday, 8:30 p.m.; Avalanche, Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
**Wolf Pack:** Belleville, Wednesday, 7 p.m.; Lehigh Valley, Friday, 7 p.m.; at Lehigh Valley, Dec. 12, 3 p.m.

### TV/RADIO

#### AUTO RACING

9 a.m.: Formula 1 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, Practice 3. (Live) ESPN2

#### BASKETBALL

Noon: Clemson at Miami. (Live) ACC  
 Noon: Memphis at Ole Miss. (Live) ESPN2  
 Noon: St. Joseph's at Villanova. (Live) FSI  
 12:30 p.m.: Marquette at Wisconsin. (Live) FOX  
 1 p.m.: Nuggets at Knicks. (Live) MSG  
 1 p.m.: San Diego State at Michigan. (Live) CBS  
 2 p.m.: Wake Forest at Virginia Tech. (Live) ACC  
 2 p.m.: Rhode Island at Providence. (Live) CBSSN  
 2 p.m.: Louisville at NC State. (Live) ESPN2  
 2 p.m.: Yale at Auburn. (Live) ESPNU  
 2 p.m.: Tennessee at Colorado. (Live) FS1  
 4 p.m.: Grambling at UConn. (Live) FS2  
 4 p.m.: Syracuse at Florida State. (Live) ACC  
 4 p.m.: Arkansas-Little Rock at Arkansas. (Live) SEC  
 4 p.m.: BYU at Missouri State. (Live) CBSSN  
 4 p.m.: Pennsylvania at Temple. (Live) ESPNU  
 4 p.m.: Loyola-Chicago at DePaul. (Live) FS1  
 7:30 p.m.: Bulls at Nets. (Live) YES  
 8 p.m.: Alabama at Gonzaga. (Live) ESPN2  
 8 p.m.: Women's College-Missouri at Baylor. (Live) ESPNU  
 9 p.m.: Iowa State at Creighton. (Live) FSI  
 10 p.m.: Celtics at Trail Blazers. (Live) NBCSB  
 10 p.m.: St. Vincent's-St. Mary's vs. Sierra Canyon. (Live) ESPN2

#### FOOTBALL

Noon: Big 12 Championship Baylor vs Oklahoma State. (Live) ABC  
 Noon: MAC Championship Kent State vs Northern Illinois. (Live) ESPN

3 p.m.: MWC Championship Utah State vs San Diego State. (Live) FOX

3:30 p.m.: Sun Belt Championship Appalachian State at Louisiana. (Live) ESPN

4 p.m.: AAC Championship Houston at Cincinnati. (Live) ABC

4 p.m.: SEC Championship Alabama vs Georgia. (Live) CBS

4 p.m.: SWAC Championship Prairie View A&M at Jackson State. (Live) ESPN2

8 p.m.: ACC Championship Pittsburgh vs Wake Forest. (Live) ABC

8 p.m.: Big Ten Championship Michigan vs Iowa. (Live) FOX

11 p.m.: USC at California. (Live) FS1

#### GOLF

Noon: Hero World Challenge, Third Round. (Live) GOLF

2:30 p.m.: Hero World Challenge, Third Round. (Live) NBC

#### HOCKEY

1 p.m.: Blues at Panthers. (Live) NHL

7 p.m.: Lightning at Bruins. (Live) NESN

7 p.m.: Canadiens at Predators. (Live) NHL

8 p.m.: Blackhawks at Rangers. (Live) MSG

#### SOCcer

8 a.m.: FIFA Arab Cup Lebanon vs Algeria. (Live) FS1

9 a.m.: Italian Serie A AC Milan vs Salernitana. (Live) CBSNN

10 a.m.: Premier League Wolverhampton Wanderers vs Liverpool. (Live) USA

11 a.m.: FIFA Arab Cup Sudan vs Egypt. (Live) FSP

Noon: Italian Serie A AS Roma vs Inter Milan. (Live) CBSSN

12:30 p.m.: Premier League Watford vs Manchester City. (Live) NBC

6:30 p.m.: MLS Real Salt Lake at Portland Timbers. (Live) FS1

#### TENNIS

8 a.m.: Tennis Sao Paulo-ATP Challenger, Semifinals & Doubles Final. (Live) TENNIS

#### WINTER SPORTS

5 p.m.: FIS Alpine Skiing Xfinity Birds of Prey. (Live) NBC

### STATE COLLEGES ROUNDUP

#### Wesleyan loses women's soccer semis

The College of New Jersey defeated Wesleyan 1-0 in the NCAA Division III women's soccer semifinals on Friday in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The Lions' Julia Obst scored on a header in the 65th minute to send TCNJ to Saturday's national championship game. No. 1 TCNJ will meet No. 5 Christopher Newport at 2:30 p.m. The Captains defeated previously unbeaten Loras 1-0 in overtime in Friday's first semifinal.

Obst's goal came on a header from Amelia Curtis from the right side inside the box, beating Wesleyan keeper Sarah Hammond.

Wesleyan (18-2-2), playing in its first NCAA women's soccer tournament and first final four, outshot TCNJ 11-3 in the first half. The Cardinals also had seven first-half corner kicks to TCNJ's two.

#### UConn men's hockey postpones weekend series with Merrimack

The UConn men's hockey games against Merrimack Friday and Saturday have been postponed due to COVID-19 protocols. Hockey East and the schools are working to reschedule these two league games.

#### Conn College advances to NCAA Division III men's soccer final

Junior Steve Yeonas scored on a diving header in the 100th minute as sixth-seeded Connecticut College (18-4-1) rallied past Washington & Lee 2-1 in overtime in the NCAA Division III men's soccer semifinals in Greensboro, N.C. The Camels will face Amherst or the University of Chicago in the championship match at 7 p.m. Saturday.

The Generals took a 1-0 lead in the 74th minute as Grant McCarty found an open Adrian Zimmerman, who scored his 11th goal of the tournament. The Camels' MT Tshuma tied it in the 83rd minute. Evading three defenders, he sent a shot from more than 25 yards off the right post and into the net.

Earlier, Conn. College junior Augie Djerdjaj was named a United Soccer Coaches All-America Second Team selection.

—Staff and wire reports

### HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

## Cromwell/Portland coach feeling a sense of déjà vu with unbeaten team

By Lori Riley  
Hartford Courant

**CROMWELL** — Randell Bennett knows how his Cromwell/Portland football players are feeling this season. Bennett was a member of the first Cromwell football team in 2001, his sophomore year. His junior year, the team was big and talented but relegated to playing junior varsity before it could go to the varsity level the next year. Nobody wanted their JV team to play the Panthers, so they practiced a lot and managed to get in three games.

His senior year, Cromwell went undefeated and advanced to the Class S final, where the Panthers ran into Ansonia, losing 55-0.

Similarly, this season the second-seeded Panthers are undefeated at 11-0 and will play No. 3 Ansonia (10-1) Sunday in the Class S semifinals at 12:30 p.m. at Pierson Park in Cromwell.

Bennett is now in his fourth season as head coach. Cromwell, which formed a co-op with Portland in 2015, did not play last year due to COVID-19.

"The parallels from now to then, with these guys having their junior year, not being able to play — 'Well, who can speak to you better than me about not being able to really play your junior year,'" Bennett said.

"Coach [Sal] Morello did a really good job that year, just keeping us focused. We didn't get to play much. We got to

practice and it ultimately led to the team being really good our senior year — and here we are now, playing the same team. Well, we're in the semifinals. It led us back here and we're super excited."

They would like a different outcome, however.

The Panthers won two games two years ago, but many of the players who started on that team were young. They are now juniors and seniors.

"Midway through the '19 season, we were in games, close. We played SMSA, who was a playoff team and it was 7-0 in the third quarter," Bennett said. "I would say to them, 'We're not supposed to win these games.' We had seven freshmen get varsity letters. You're not taking kids from eighth grade and beating anybody. I said,

'Let's just play football every week, watch the film and the things we need to get better at, we'll work on in practice. And we'll see next week how it goes. But we're not losing to Rocky Hill!'"

Rocky Hill is traditionally the Thanksgiving game for Cromwell/Portland. The Panthers, who had lost eight straight games, won the 2019 matchup 20-14.

"That set up the whole offseason. They worked up until the COVID break," Bennett said. "Then we came back for those couple practices [last fall], then they went right back to the weight room."

So, no, they're not surprised that they are 11-0.

"We kind of knew going



Cromwell/Portland football coach Randell Bennett looks on as his son Trey, 14 months, gives a football to junior Griffin Shafer before practice Thursday afternoon at Cromwell High. Cromwell is preparing to play Ansonia in the Class S semifinals Sunday at Pierson Park in Cromwell. **LORI RILEY/HARTFORD COURANT**

in we had a lot of talent coming in and a lot of experience from 2019 and other teams didn't really have that experience we had," junior quarterback Cole Brisson said. "I played and a lot of other freshmen played, lot of sophomores, at the time, played. We had a lot of starters return. So at practice, we got right into it."

Brisson has passed for 1,755 yards and 22 touchdowns, while junior Alex Hair has rushed for 765 yards and 10 touchdowns.

The Panthers have had some close games the past few weeks. They beat Stafford/East Windsor/Somers 14-6 on Nov. 19. Against Rocky Hill on Thanksgiving Eve, they were down 14 in the third quarter and rallied to win 33-21. In the Class S

quarterfinal game Tuesday, they beat No. 7 seed Notre Dame-Fairfield 29-20.

"We needed to be tested," Brisson said. "It kind of helped us."

Cromwell hasn't won a title since 2008 and hasn't been to the final since 2011, when the Panthers lost to Holy Cross. Ansonia last won Class S in 2016, beating Cromwell/Portland in the semifinals to get there.

"They are Ansonia; not much has changed about them," Bennett said. "You have to strap your helmet up and get ready for a fight, because they're going to come right at you. The faces change, but they'll come right at you."

*Lori Riley can be reached at lriley@courant.com.*

### Amore

from Page 1

At last count, that one had 932,000 views.

"Kind of like a spur of the moment thing," Lewis says. "It really took off, came at a time when fans were able to share it. It might have turned out a little different if we didn't have the season that we did. I was kind of playing with fire a little bit."

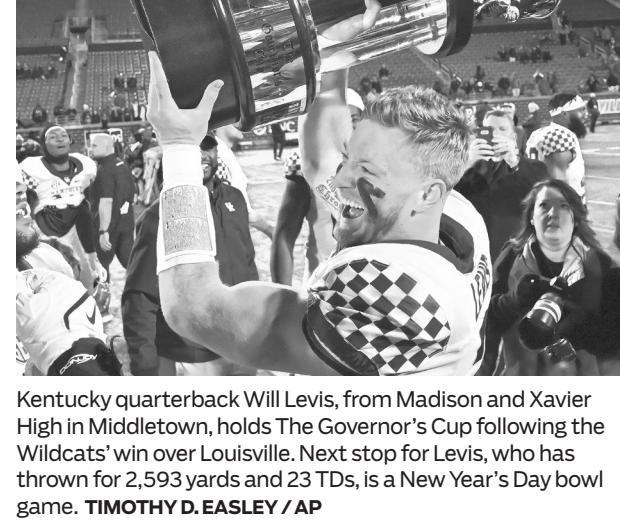
Levis is enjoying his first, perhaps only, season at Kentucky immensely, you've surely guessed by now. But most of the fun times have come on the field.

Week after week in the most powerful of the Power Five conferences, he's kept pace, completing 66.5% of his passes for 2,593 yards and 23 TDs with 12 interceptions, and he's rushed for 387 yards and nine TDs. The Wildcats are 9-3, expected to play in either the Citrus or Outback Bowl on Jan. 1, creating buzz on a campus that usually waits for basketball season to go bananas.

"Obviously, when everyone thinks of Kentucky, the first thing they think of is basketball," Lewis says. "But our fans here are as good as any other fans in the country, and the hype around here, especially when things are going well, is very, very, very real."

Levis grew up in Madison, in a house his grandfather, David Kelley, built. Kelley, Carm Cozza's long-time defensive assistant at Yale, was Will's "biggest fan and most important mentor," says Lewis' mother, Beth.

Kelley died in July 2020, but the words he used to end nearly every conversation, "never give up," still resonate with his grandson.



Kentucky quarterback Will Lewis, from Madison and Xavier High in Middletown, holds The Governor's Cup following the Wildcats' win over Louisville. Next stop for Lewis, who has thrown for 2,593 yards and 23 TDs, is a New Year's Day bowl game. **TIMOTHY D. EASLEY / AP**

degree in finance from Penn State in three years, and with three years of eligibility he went looking for a new school.

He vibed with head coach Mark Stoops and offensive coordinator Liam Coen, and found his football happy place in Kentucky.

"It just felt right," Lewis says. "I really liked [Coen's] philosophy and the offense he was going to be running."

"I thought it fit for my skill set. It's time and place, and I just find myself at a place where everything is kind of coming together for me. I'm a much better quarterback now than I was then."

Levis threw for 367 yards and four TDs in his first game, a win over Louisiana-Monroe. After knocking off Missouri, Chattanooga, Florida, South Carolina and LSU, Kentucky was 6-0 for the first time since 1950, when Bear Bryant coached the 'Cats.

"Probably the most complete game as a quar-

terback was against LSU," says Lewis, who completed 14 of 17 passes, for a 212.2 rating in that game with three TDs passing and two running.

"It was the first time we had beaten them in a really long time. I was able to really be dialed in with my footwork, accuracy and decision-making, and I was able to do things with my feet."

Kentucky was ranked 11th for a showdown with No. 1 Georgia on Oct. 16. The game doesn't get any faster than it does against the Bulldogs defense.

Levis completed 32 of 42 for 192 yards and two TDs in a 30-13 loss, the first of three in a row. But he and the Wildcats won their last three, beating Louisville 52-21 last week to put themselves in "New Year's Six" bowl territory.

After the bowl game, Lewis will have a new round of choices. Try the NFL now? Extend his college career one or two more years?

"I think my progression this whole year has proved I have that ability to play at the next level," Lewis says. "I'm excited to go through the process of figuring out what I want to do."

Levis, pursuing a master's in finance, is finishing up his semester. His class manages a \$5 million portfolio, and he just finished a major project, making his case for what stocks to buy or sell.

Meanwhile, he's selling branded merchandise on [www.levis7.com](http://www.levis7.com).

With all that's going right for him, it seems certain the world will one day be Will Lewis' oyster — as long as he doesn't try to eat the shell.

*Dom Amore can be reached at domare@courant.com.*

### LATE THURSDAY

#### S

## SCOREBOARD

### NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE		ATLANTIC			
FAVORITE	SATURDAY	W	L	PCT	GB
Brooklyn	15	6	.714	—	
Boston	12	10	.545	3 1/2	
New York	11	11	.500	4 1/2	
Philadelphia	11	11	.500	4 1/2	
Toronto	10	13	.435	6	
SOUTHEAST		W	L	PCT	GB
Washington	14	8	.636	—	
Miami	13	9	.591	1	
Atlanta	12	10	.545	2	
Charlotte	13	11	.542	2	
Orlando	5	18	.217	9 1/2	
CENTRAL		W	L	PCT	GB
Chicago	15	8	.652	—	
Milwaukee	14	9	.609	1	
Cleveland	12	10	.545	2 1/2	
Indiana	9	15	.375	6 1/2	
Detroit	4	18	.182	10 1/2	
WESTERN CONFERENCE		W	L	PCT	GB
SOUTHWEST		W	L	PCT	GB
Dallas	11	9	.550	—	
Memphis	12	10	.545	—	
San Antonio	7	13	.350	4	
New Orleans	6	18	.250	7	
Houston	5	16	.238	6 1/2	
NORTHWEST		W	L	PCT	GB
Utah	14	7	.667	—	
Minnesota	11	11	.500	3 1/2	
Portland	11	12	.478	4	
Denver	10	11	.476	4	
Oklahoma City	6	16	.273	8 1/2	
PACIFIC		W	L	PCT	GB
Phoenix	19	3	.864	—	
Golden State	18	3	.857	1/2	
L.A. Lakers	12	11	.522	7 1/2	
L.A. Clippers	11	11	.500	8	
Sacramento	9	14	.391	10 1/2	

### WESTERN CONFERENCE

#### SOUTHWEST

#### NORTHWEST

#### PACIFIC

### NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE		ATLANTIC			
FAVORITE	SATURDAY	GP	W	L	PTS
Florida	23	16	4	3	35
Toronto	24	17	6	1	35
Tampa Bay	22	13	5	4	30
Detroit	24	12	9	3	27
Boston	20	12	8	0	24
Buffalo	23	8	12	3	19
Montreal	25	6	17	2	14
Washington	24	14	4	6	34
N.Y. Rangers	21	14	4	3	31
Carolina	22	15	6	1	31
Pittsburgh	23	10	8	5	25
Columbus	21	12	9	0	24
New Jersey	21	9	8	4	22
Philadelphia	21	8	9	4	20
N.Y. Islanders	18	5	10	3	13
WESTERN CONFERENCE		GP	W	L	PTS
CENTRAL		GP	W	L	PTS
Minnesota	23	16	6	1	33
St. Louis	23	12	8	3	27
Dallas	21	12	7	2	26
Colorado	20	12	7	1	25
Nashville	23	12	10	1	25
Winnipeg	22	10	8	4	24
Chicago	22	8	12	2	18
Arizona	23	5	16	2	12
PACIFIC		GP	W	L	PTS
Calgary	23	14	4	5	33
Edmonton	21	16	5	0	32
Anaheim	24	13	8	3	29
San Jose	23	13	9	1	27
Vegas	22	12	10	0	24
Los Angeles	22	9	9	4	22
Seattle	23	8	12	3	18
Vancouver	24	8	14	2	18

#### NOTE:

Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

#### FRIDAY'S RESULTS

Cleveland at Washington, late  
Miami at Indiana, late  
Minnesota at Brooklyn, late  
Philadelphia at Atlanta, late  
Orlando at Houston, late  
New Orleans at Dallas, late  
Boston at Utah, late  
L.A. Clippers at L.A. Lakers, late  
Phoenix at Golden State, late

#### SATURDAY'S GAMES

Denver at New York, 1 p.m.  
Chicago at Brooklyn, 8 p.m.  
Miami at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.  
Memphis at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.  
San Antonio at Golden State, 8:30 p.m.  
Boston at Portland, 10 p.m.  
L.A. Clippers at Sacramento, 10 p.m.

#### SUNDAY'S GAMES

Utah at Cleveland, 3:30 p.m.  
Charlotte at Atlanta, 6 p.m.  
Washington at Toronto, 6 p.m.  
New Orleans at Houston, 7 p.m.

#### THURSDAY'S RESULTS

Chicago 119, New York 115  
Toronto 97, Milwaukee 93  
Memphis 152, Oklahoma City 79  
Phoenix 114, Detroit 103  
San Antonio 114, Portland 83

#### TENNIS

#### DAVIS CUP WORLD GROUP FINAL

#### FRIDAY'S SEMIFINALS

Hard-Indoor, Group Robin  
At Madrid Arena, Madrid, Spain

#### CROATIA 2, SERBIA 1

Borna Gojo (C) d.  
Dusan Lajovic, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2

Novak Djokovic (S) d. Marin Cilic, 6-4, 6-2

Nikola Mektic/ Mat Pavic (C)

d. Nikola Cacic/Novak Djokovic, 7-5, 6-1

#### SATURDAY SEMIFINAL, Madrid Arena

Russian Federation vs. Germany, 7 a.m.

#### ODDS

#### COLLEGE BASKETBALL SATURDAY

#### FAVORITE LINE O/U UNDERDOG

at UMass 3 (15%) Harvard 10(142%) Nebraska

at Miami 1 (140%) Clemson 13(129%) at IUPUI

Memphis 1/2 (138%) Mississippi

at Milwaukee 3 (139%) Robert Morris

at Villanova 22/2 (143%) Saint Joseph's

at Wisconsin 8/13 (137%) Marquette

at Michigan 7/2 (125%) San Diego St.

N. Kentucky 3/13 (142%) at Fort Wayne

Miami (Ohio) 1/2 (148%) at Indiana St.

E. Washington 5/14 (17%) at Omaha

at Charlotte 5 (131%) Geo. Wash.

at Dayton 19 (127%) N. Illinois

at Providence 5 (137%) Rhode Island

Louisville 1/2 (137%) at St. Louis

at Virginia Tech 9/2 (133%) Wake Forest

at Evansville 3/2 (132%) Tenn. Tech

at Auburn 16 (148%) Yale

Tennessee 4/4 (140%) at Colorado

Georgia St. 3 (146%) at Mercer

at W. Illinois 14 (127%) UT Martin

at Davidson 21 (139%) Wm & Mary

at Cleveland St. 3 (145%) Wright St.

at Bradley 10 (133%) SIU Edw'svile

at St. Bonaventure 4 (15%) Buffalo

Loyola Chicago 2/4 (141%) at DePaul

at Arkansas 24/2 (148%) UALR

at Colorado St. 3 (135%) at Sacra. St.

at Florida St. 7/2 (150%) Syracuse

at Princeton 4/2 (143%) Drexel

BYU 2/2 (140%) at Missouri St.

at Temple 4/2 (137%) Pennsylvania

at Michigan St. 14 (145%) Toledo

Tennessee St. 7 (144%) at Chicago St.

S. Utah 16/150% at Idaho

at Santa Clara 1/2 (148%) LaTech

at SMU 4 (136%) Vanderbilt

USC 1 (128%) at Wash. St.

at Saint Louis 2 (144%) UAB

at Marshall 9 (154%) Duquesne

at Green Bay 2/2 (133%) Yngstwn St.

Loy. Marymount 8 (149%) at Lg Bch St.

at Fresno St. 12 (142%) CS Northridge

at George Mason 7/2 (126%) Old Dominion

**MEN'S BASKETBALL**  
Saturday: vs. Grambling,  
4 p.m., FS2

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**  
Sunday: vs. Notre Dame,  
noon, FS1

**UCONN**  
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UConn guard Evina Westbrook (22) passes the ball against Seton Hall forward Kailah Harris during the first half Friday in South Orange, N.J. NOAH K. MURRAY/AP

## UConn

from Page 1

the buzzer pushed their lead to 53-36.

Seton Hall later cut the deficit to 12 with just over six minutes to play before UConn went on a 12-2 run to get enough breathing room and ultimately secure the win. It started with Evina Westbrook's steal and score, which extended the Huskies' advantage back up to 14, and Bueckers made three baskets to ward off the Pirates' comeback attempt.

## Notes

Auriemma said that junior Aubrey Griffin, who was initially

### UCONN 74, SETON HALL 49

UConn	M	FG	FT	RB	A	PF	PT
Bueckers	34	11-18	0-0	9	7	3	23
Williams	36	8-16	0-0	3	1	1	17
Edwards	34	6-11	0-0	7	0	3	12
Nelson-Ododa	25	5-10	0-0	5	3	2	10
Westbrook	30	1-6	3-3	4	3	1	5
Juhasz	15	2-4	0-0	10	1	1	5
Muhl	16	1-5	0-0	4	1	4	2
Ducharme	6	0-1	0-0	0	0	2	0
McLean	4	0-0	0-2	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>— 34-71</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>48 16 17</b>	<b>74</b>			

Three-point goals: 3-16, 18.8% (Juhasz 1-1, Williams 1-3, Bueckers 1-4, Edwards 0-1, Ducharme 0-1, Muhl 0-2, Westbrook 0-4). FG pct.: 47.9. FT pct.: 60.0. Team rebounds: 5. Turnovers: 13 (Edwards 5, Nelson-Ododa 2, Muhl 2, Williams, Westbrook, Juhasz, Ducharme). Blocks: 3 (Williams, Nelson-Ododa, Juhasz). Steals: 10 (Bueckers 5, Westbrook 2, Muhl 2, Nelson-Ododa).

supposed to make her season debut this weekend, aggravated a back injury on Thursday. She has no timetable for her return.

Seton Hall's Andra Espinoza-Hunter, who started her career

### SETON HALL

	M	FG	FT	RB	A	PF	PT
Park-Lane	39	5-17	8-10	4	5	2	20
Jackson	40	5-17	2-2	4	0	2	14
Cooks	34	5-15	2-2	6	2	3	13
Armstrong	36	1-5	0-0	3	1	1	2
Harris	14	0-2	0-0	1	1	2	0
Bemby	33	0-2	0-0	6	0	3	0
Cummings	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Treadwell	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
Robinson	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>— 16-58</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>49</b>	

Three-point goals: 5-31, 16.1% (Park-Lane 2-8, Jackson 2-11, Cooks 1-9, Armstrong 0-3). FG pct.: 27.6. FT pct.: 85.7. Team rebounds: 6. Turnovers: 15 (Jackson 4, Park-Lane 3, Armstrong 2, Harris 2, Bemby 2, Cooks, Team). Blocks: 0. Steals: 5 (Cooks 2, Bemby 2, Armstrong).

### UConn

	M	FG	FT	RB	A	PF	PT
Seton Hall	16	23	14	21	—	74	
	17	6	13	13	—	49	

Officials: Apellaniz, Resch, Vaszily. Att.: 1,320 at Walsh Gymnasium, South Orange, N.J.

at UConn, did not play Friday. She was violated due to a suspension of team rules.

Alexa Philippou can be reached at [aphilippou@courant.com](mailto:aphilippou@courant.com)

## Mora

from Page 1

According to Bateman's lawsuit, he alleges that he was forced to play before serious injuries in both feet had sufficiently healed and was discouraged from seeking medical attention. Lacy's suit alleges he was

discouraged from complaining about pain in his right hip. He eventually had surgery in 2017 and missed that season. After rehabbing from surgery, Lacy hoped to be drafted by the NFL or signed as an undrafted free agent but was not, according to the lawsuit. He later signed with the Massachusetts Pirates in the Arena

Football League but was released in May 2019.

In response to those lawsuits, UCLA's athletic department said in a statement in 2019, "We strongly deny and will defend ourselves against the allegations made in the lawsuit. We handle every injury with the highest standard of care, and take potential head inju-

ries very seriously."

Mora, who received a \$12 million buyout under the terms of his last contract at UCLA, was out of coaching, living in Idaho and working on TV for four years when he contacted UConn to express his interest in the job. He has explained to NFL Hall of Famer Morten Andersen in a podcast this

week that he stayed out of coaching to spend more time with his family.

UConn AD David Benedict traveled to Idaho to spend several days with Mora before hiring him Nov. 11.

According to Los Angeles Superior Court records, Mora, Klemm and Venute were dismissed from the lawsuits brought by the

UCLA players on Sept. 28 (Lopez), Sept. 29 (Moala) and Oct. 28 (Lacy) of 2021, and papers were filed Nov. 2, 2021 (by Bateman) to dismiss those individuals from the fourth.

The lawsuits are ongoing with UCLA regents.

Dom Amore can be reached at [damore@courant.com](mailto:damore@courant.com).

## Did you know?

In 2020, 60,714 weather events resulted in 585 deaths and 1,708 injuries. Winter weather, tornadoes, and floods were responsible for the most deaths.

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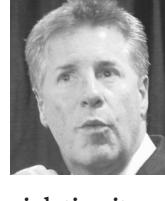
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# NATIONAL SPORTS REPORT

## SHORTS

### Blazers GM dismissed after probe



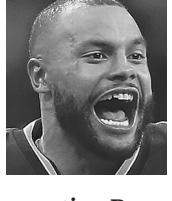
The Trail Blazers fired Neil Olshey, the team's president of basketball operations and general manager, on Friday after an investigation into workplace conduct. The Blazers promoted director of player personnel Joe Cronin to interim GM. The team said in a statement that Olshey was dismissed for violating its code of conduct. The Blazers had hired an outside firm last month to investigate workplace environment concerns stemming from allegations of misconduct involving Olshey. The dismissal is effective immediately. "Out of respect for those who candidly participated in that privileged investigation, we will not release or discuss it. We are confident that these changes will help build a more positive and respectful working environment," the Blazers said in a statement. Portland parted ways with long-time coach Terry Stotts at the end of last season and hired Chauncey Billups as his replacement. The move came amid questions about how the Blazers selected Billups over more experienced candidates and concerns about sexual assault allegations lodged against him.

### Turgeon out as Terps' hoops coach



Mark Turgeon's tenure at Maryland is over, less than a month after the start of his 11th season at the helm. Again, the Terrapins were struggling to reach their potential — although the abrupt change still came with a jolt, just eight games into the 2021-22 campaign. "After a series of conversations with Coach Turgeon, we agreed that a coaching change was the best move for Coach Turgeon and for the Maryland men's basketball program," athletic director Damon Evans said in a statement. "He has dedicated over a decade of his life to the University of Maryland, and has coached with distinction and honor." Maryland announced Friday that Turgeon was stepping down, and the athletic department described the move as a mutual decision. Assistant Danny Manning was made interim coach for the rest of the season. When he took over, Turgeon had the challenging task of replacing Gary Williams, who led the Terrapins to their only national title in men's basketball in 2002. Turgeon mostly kept Maryland relevant in both the ACC and Big Ten, but the program never reached its previous heights.

### Cowboys have time to fix issues



Dak Prescott, pictured, and the Cowboys have issues on offense, with the luxury of time to fix them coming off a victory at New Orleans that could result in a three-game lead in the NFC East with five to go. The Cowboys had a season-high six three-and-outs in a 27-17 victory over the Saints — not counting Prescott's interception on another three-play possession in the fourth quarter. The Dallas offense has 16 three-and-outs the past three games after just 15 in the first nine. The Cowboys (8-4) might still have the NFL's No. 1 offense in total yards when they return from a mini-break at Washington on Dec. 12. But that unit hasn't looked anything like it for most of a 2-3 stretch. Three times in the fourth quarter, Prescott had chances to put away the Saints, twice after interceptions in the first four-pick game for the Dallas defense in almost 11 years. The offense failed each time, including on Prescott's interception on a poor decision. "We're not doing well, and they're continuing to go out there and get us the ball back," Prescott said. "Credit this win to them."

—Associated Press



In this 2017 photo, the major league baseball logo is shown tattooed on MLB shortstop Javier Baez. DARRON CUMMINGS/AP

## MLB COMMENTARY

# Another black mark

Baseball can't handle going down this road once again

By Paul Newberry

Associated Press

Baseball's last labor dispute was devastating, but the comeback had two big things working in its favor. Cal Ripken Jr. and steroids.

The sport won't be so fortuitous if this lockout lingers into the spring.

For the national pastime to maintain some semblance of its former glory, we better be talking about WAR and slash lines instead of the CBA and luxury tax rates by the time the Super Bowl is over.

The brouhaha that came to a head this week with the owners locking out the players is a mere sideshow at the moment, overshadowed by the NFL playoff races and the biggest games of the college football season.

With basketball and hockey also ramping up, there's plenty to keep sports fans distracted for the next couple of months while the two sides haggle over the details that most of us couldn't care less about.

"This is peak college football season, and the NFL has all sorts of cool narratives," said Mike Lewis, a marketing professor at Emory University in Atlanta. "This is a good time from a strictly negotiation point of view for the owners to play a little hard ball."

All that changes if an agreement hasn't been reached by mid-February, when the dawn of spring training still serves as a symbolic end to the long, dark winter.

The situation is even more tenuous with baseball still trying to bounce back from the COVID-shortened 2020 season, which was played largely in empty stadiums.

"Losing two out of three opening days would be brutal," Lewis said.

Some will argue the sport never fully recovered from its last labor dispute, which wiped out the 1994 World Series and dragged on for nearly eight months.

They're probably right, but baseball caught a huge break when two compelling storylines lured many leery fans back to the ballparks.

First, there was Ripken's pursuit of one of the most hallowed records in all of sports.

In September of 1995, just five months after the strike petered out,

Ripken broke Lou Gehrig's mark by playing in his 2,131st consecutive game. It was a moment that mesmerized the nation, and undoubtedly healed some of the game's self-inflicted wounds.

Coming off the strike, baseball conveniently looked the other way while its hitters transformed themselves into Incredible Hulks.

The ball started flying over the fence at a stupefying rate, culminating in the home-run derby between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa that captivated the nation through the summer of 1998. It's hard to envision a similar scenario this time around.

For one, the game's popularity is even more diluted than it was a quarter-century ago. Many young people have turned away from baseball, viewing it as staid and old-fashioned in an increasingly fast-paced world.

filled with shinier entertainment options. Anyone who has sat through a four-hour-plus game — filled largely with players going through meaningless gyrations instead of any real action — would find it hard to counter that viewpoint.

Lewis recently conducted a survey that looked at the evolving state of sports fandom in America.

Every sport has taken a hit, he said, but baseball "has essentially crashed" among Generation Z, those born since the last labor stoppage.

"It's really a mismatch on multiple levels," he said. "That generation wants to look at content on their phone. They want to get their highlights on Instagram and TikTok.

Baseball is built on local markets and people sitting in a stadium for three or four hours. The technology, the marketing of the game — whatever it is — has really created a disconnect with young people, and particularly young males, in baseball."

Baseball does have some advantages over other sports, Lewis said.

"Sure, baseball has some challenges with an older fan base," he said. "But baseball also has more kids going to major league parks than any other professional league. There's more of a family connection in baseball. It's a game that almost has more of a wholesomeness to it than other sports. That's got some power."

If baseball wants to maintain that connection, it needs to settle this labor dispute before anyone really notices.

A deadline to keep in mind is Feb. 14.

The day after the Super Bowl.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL STORYLINES

# Plenty to prove in conference championships

By C.J. Doon | The Baltimore Sun

Conference championship weekend is finally here. Here's a look at the biggest storylines heading into the most important games of the year:

**Georgia's time to prove itself:** While much of this college football season has been unpredictable, Georgia's dominance has never been questioned. The Bulldogs rose to No. 1 in the polls in Week 7 and didn't look back, rolling to big wins week after week thanks to a historically great defense. But if there's one knock against Georgia, it's the lack of quality opponents.

The Dawgs faced just three teams ranked in the College Football Playoff committee's Top 25 — No. 20 Clemson, No. 22 Arkansas and No. 23 Kentucky. Georgia beat those teams by a combined score of 77-16, so it's not as if the Dawgs have shown any signs of weakness. But No. 3-ranked Alabama coached by Nick Saban is a different beast.

There's a long-running joke of how long it's been since Georgia last won a national title — 14,947 days as of Saturday, to be exact — and any Dawgs fan, player or coach is fooling themselves if they don't think all of that pressure won't resurface in Atlanta. Of course, there's a certain swagger about this Georgia team that feels a little bit different. In fact, Alabama hasn't been this big of an underdog since 2008, Saban's second season in Tuscaloosa.

Georgia's defense is championship caliber, but how will it handle Heisman Trophy front-runner Bryce Young? Quarterback Stetson Bennett IV has been unflappable so far, but what happens if the Dawgs fall behind early?

**Bearcats eye perfection:** Don't stumble now, Cincinnati. The Bearcats have defied the odds by putting themselves in great position to be the first Group of Five team to make the playoffs. After a perfect 12-0 start, it's win-and-in against Houston on Saturday night.

But this won't be a cake walk for No. 4 Cincinnati. Led by a talented offense and a surprisingly effective defense, No. 21 Houston has rolled to 11 straight wins after a season-opening loss to Texas Tech. Quarterback Clayton Tune has been exceptional of late, throwing 14 touchdown passes and two interceptions in his past five games. The defense ranks 15th in ESPN's SP+, a tempo- and opponent-adjusted measure of efficiency.

There's no question Cincinnati is the most talented team in the American Athletic Conference, but Houston is a close second.

**Iowa could play spoiler:** Michigan finally broke the streak against hated rival Ohio State, beating the Buckeyes for the first time in 10 years. It gave the No. 2 Wolverines their first Big Ten championship game berth since its inception in 2011 and a shot at their first playoff appearance. That is, if Iowa doesn't get in the way.

The No. 13 Hawkeyes needed a loss by Wisconsin last weekend just to get into this game, but they've been one of the most solid teams in the country all year. The offense remains one of the nation's worst, but the defense is championship caliber. That's the only thing that stands in the way of one of the biggest moments in Michigan history.

**Big 12 about to enter a new era:** Nobody expected No. 5 Oklahoma State to be this good this season. The Cowboys have ridden one of the nation's best defenses to the Big 12 championship game. If they win Saturday against No. 9 Baylor and Alabama and Cincinnati both lose, they're sitting pretty for the final playoff rankings.

But even if this season does not end with a playoff berth, it signals a potential changing of the guard in the Big 12. With No. 14 Oklahoma and Texas leaving for the SEC, Oklahoma State and Baylor have emerged as the new leaders of the conference. The Bears have managed to keep coach Dave Aranda during this whirlwind hiring cycle, a big step toward establishing a consistent winner in a conference welcoming Cincinnati, Houston, BYU and UCF. Oklahoma has been the face of football in the Big 12 under coach Lincoln Riley, but his departure for USC opens the door for another contender to emerge.

**Surprise party in the ACC:** With Clemson taking a dip this season and Miami, Florida State and Virginia Tech still struggling to recapture their former glory, the ACC has been wide-open this season. So it's only fitting that two programs made a surprise run to the championship game in No. 15 Pittsburgh and No. 16 Wake Forest.

Pitt has enjoyed the success of fifth-year quarterback Kenny Pickett, who has risen from relative anonymity to the potential top quarterback in the 2022 NFL draft. His counterpart Saturday night, Wake Forest's Sam Hartman, is another late bloomer.

The question is, which team is better set up for future success? Despite joining the team in 2018, Hartman is only a redshirt sophomore. Dave Clawson, the ACC Coach of the Year, recently signed a long-term extension to stay at Wake Forest. Will Pitt coach Pat Narduzzi be able to keep up the same level of success when his star quarterback leaves for the NFL?

# MOTORING

COURANT.COM/CLASSIFIED/AUTOMOTIVE



One of four new colors, Vivid Orange Metallic, with a white-painted roof, gives the Chevrolet Trailblazer a far greater presence than it might otherwise have. JIM FRENK/CHEVROLET PHOTOS

## Daily driving device

In a market filled with compelling alternatives, the 2022 Chevy Trailblazer is a solid choice

**By Larry Printz**  
Tribune News Service

**H**aving arrived in 2021 wearing a nameplate last used in 2009 on a midsize, body-on-frame SUV, the 2022 Trailblazer is now a subcompact crossover. Developed and built by GM Korea in Incheon, South Korea, it doesn't feel much like its larger American counterparts. Instead, the Trailblazer is a modestly sized, modestly styled daily driving device, one that competes in an intensely competitive market segment against such stalwarts as the funky and endearing Kia Soul, the athletic yet upscale Mazda MX-30, the fun-to-drive Hyundai Kona, and such popular options as the stylish Jeep Compass and unglamorous Subaru Crosstrek.

Against these competitors, the Trailblazer comes off as a bit generic and charmless, a midpack competitor bereft of personality. But spend some time with it, and its charms become more apparent. It starts when you first get in. The Trailblazer's upright styling makes entering or exiting a breeze, something you won't find on competitors. Or try to schlep home an eight-foot piece of lumber; the Trailblazer's cabin can accommodate an 8-foot-long item. Just fold down the front passenger seat and angle the wood from there to the rear driver's side. It will fit with the doors shut. Sweet. And check out the cargo capacity on this Lilliputian: more than 25 cubic feet; that beats any full-sized sedan. And it's surprisingly roomy in both rows for full-size adults.

Starting to look good, isn't it?

The Trailblazer's 1.2-liter three-cylinder turbocharged engine funnels 137 horsepower through a continuously variable transmission to the front wheels. A better choice is the optional 155-horse-



The interior's design is decidedly modern in appearance, but lacking a point of view, rendering it utterly charmless.

power 1.3-liter, three-cylinder turbocharged engine. Front-wheel drive is standard with either engine. All wheel drive is optional, but comes solely with the larger engine and a nine-speed automatic transmission. Towing is rated at 1,000 pounds with the towing package.

Fuel economy is OK, but not as high as you might expect given its size. The EPA rates the Trailblazer at 30 mpg in combined city/highway driving with the standard 1.2-liter engine; 28 mpg with the larger engine and all-wheel drive. But opt for the larger engine and skip all-wheel drive and the EPA predicts you'll see 31 mpg — not bad.

Chevrolet offers this affordable crossover in ascending LS, LT, ACTIV and RS trim levels, with ACTIV models

getting off-road worthy tires, and RS trims receiving a black-out treatment. They're priced identically, so it's basically a question of your personal preference.

Chevrolet sent an all-wheel drive ACTIV model for a week-long drive.

The test vehicle was painted one of four new colors for 2022, Vivid Orange Metallic, accented with a white-painted roof, giving it a far greater presence than it might otherwise have. And thankfully, the Trailblazer is big enough that a grown man won't look silly getting out of one, something that can't be said of the smaller Trax, which makes you look as if you're getting out of a clown car.

Interior ambience is about what you'd expect of a vehicle that starts at around

\$21,000: there's lots of hard black plastic. The interior's design is decidedly modern in appearance, but lacking a point of view, rendering it utterly charmless. At least it's functional, which is all that most buyers expect at this price. A 7-inch color touch screen anchors the instrument panel. Wireless Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and Amazon Alexa capability are available, as is a worthwhile \$1,620 Technology Package that enlarges the touch screen to eight inches, and adds adaptive cruise control, wireless charging, Bose premium audio, HD Radio, SiriusXM, an SD card reader, an HD rear vision camera, 4.2-inch driver information display and LED headlamps. You might also want to splurge for the \$1,770 Sun and Liftgate Package, which bright-

ens up the gloomy interior with a panoramic sunroof and adds a hands-free programmable power liftgate.

Despite the ACTIV model's off-road pretensions, there's no center-locking differential or special low gear. This is more the urban warrior, one that might find its way tromping across an odd field every now and then, or transporting its owner through foul weather. The Trailblazer's three-cylinder heart provides responsive power around town, and at speed. But entering an interstate takes a bit longer than you might expect. Maneuverability is good thanks to its size and tight turning radius, but it's not a sporty handler. Body lean is evident once you crank the wheel, and the cabin becomes noisy at higher speeds and the ride occasionally harsh over broken pavement. Also, there's an abundance of engine vibration, particularly around town, which explains why a massaging seat isn't optional; you don't need one.

Chevrolet did do a good job of providing a decent amount of standard driver-assistance safety gear, including automatic emergency braking, front pedestrian braking, lane keep assist with lane departure warning, following distance indicator, forward collision alert and automatic headlamps. Rear park assist, rear cross traffic alert, lane change alert with side blind zone alert are part of a \$345 Driver Confidence Package.

While no longer the Trailblazer of old, the new one proves to be a solidly modern choice in a market filled with compelling alternatives. One is even made by GM: the Buick Encore GX, the Trailblazer's mechanical twin. It's worth considering if you're also shopping for a heavily optioned Trailblazer. You may find little difference in price, making the fancier nameplate the better option.

## Survey: Glitches dent electric SUV reliability

Associated Press

Electric SUVs generally are among the least reliable vehicles on the road, but it's not because of the batteries or electric motors that power them.

Instead, it's because of glitch-prone electronics including climate controls and power equipment, the annual auto reliability survey of subscribers by Consumer Reports found.

Electric SUVs were the least reliable category in the annual survey of

subscribers to the magazine and website who collectively own more than 300,000 vehicles. Tesla's Models X and Y, the Audi E-Tron and Volkswagen ID.4 were among the vehicles singled out as having problems in areas other than the electric powertrain.

In contrast, compact and plug-in gas-electric hybrids led by the Toyota Prius and Prius Prime and the Honda Insight were the most reliable category, said Jake Fisher, senior director of

auto testing for Consumer Reports.

Overall, Japanese brands led by Lexus, Mazda, Toyota and Infiniti took eight of the top 10 spots in the reliability survey. General Motors' Buick brand finished fifth, and BMW's Mini was 10th.

Ford's Lincoln luxury brand finished last of 28 brands with Tesla, Jeep, Genesis and Volkswagen rounding out the bottom five. Electric vehicles, with far fewer moving parts, should be more reliable

than gas-powered vehicles, Fisher said. But electric SUVs tend to be higher-priced luxury vehicles at present, and those have all the latest technology that can cause trouble, he said.

"The powertrains aren't the problem," Fisher said. Instead, the electric SUVs often are equipped with electric door handles, electric-activated climate control vents and other features. "By having all of these new technologies saddled into these early adopter-mobiles, there are



A Tesla Model Y Long Range is displayed Feb. 24 at the Tesla Gallery in Troy, Michigan. CARLOS OSORIO/AP

more problems associated with them."

Fisher said electric vehicles are likely to be more

reliable than gas-powered ones as manufacturers work the bugs out of their features.



The 2022 Volkswagen Golf GTI has a standard manual six-speed transmission or an optional seven-speed dual-clutch automatic. DANIEL BYRNE/VOLKSWAGEN

**REVIEW**

## VW Golf GTI getting better

By Henry Payne  
The Detroit News

It's not easy staying top dog.

The Volkswagen Golf GTI (then badged Rabbit GTI for the U.S. market) won America's hearts as the first affordable pocket rocket in 1983. By turning a standard compact Golf into a steroid-infused, apex-carving, cargo-hauling fun box, VW inspired a segment that has born imitators like the Ford Focus ST, Honda Civic Si, Subaru WRX, Hyundai Veloster, Hyundai Elantra N and Mazda 3 Turbo.

Golf GTI has responded to challengers to the throne with constant improvement complementing its innate German-engineered talent. The third-Gen Mark III introduced a sensational V-6 engine. Mark V showed off phone dial wheels, one of V-dub's most distinctive designs.

Of late, GTI has lagged in interior panache. The mesmerizing Mazda 3, for example, upped the ante with its stylish, driver-centric design. But Wolfsburg has been burning the midnight oil on dashboard upgrades.

The result is the best GTI ever, a landmark model that — like Gen I — sets a new bar for pocket rockets. It is a vehicle so good that Audi S3 consumers will be left wondering

### 2022 Volkswagen Golf GTI

**Price:** \$30,540 (\$39,385 manual with carbon fiber package as tested)

**Power plant:** 2.0-liter turbo-4 cylinder

**Power:** 241 horsepower, 273 pound-feet of torque

**Performance:** 0-60 mph, 5.4 seconds (automatic, Motor Trend)

**Fuel economy:** EPA, 24 mpg city/34 highway/28 combined (manual); 25 mpg city/34 highway/28 combined (auto)

why they paid 16 grand more. My GTI tester was painted bright Pomelo Yellow to call attention to the feat.

The VW's huge twinned, all-digital displays are state-of-the-art. You want an Audi? The 10.5-inch instrument display offers five configurations just like its luxe cousin. GTI telegraphs this interior transformation with its sexiest exterior in years.

Menacing narrow headlights set the tone. Sharply creased hood and shoulders once again remind of Audi. Get the 19-inch wheels. Love it.

Love the handling, too. Over the roller-coaster State Route 209 west of Asheville, North Carolina, the GTI stormed about as if on rails. GTI comes standard with a limited-slip front differential,

suspension upgrades and an aluminum subframe that actually reduces curb weight from last gen.

A driver's car like this deserves to have its neck wrung with a manual shifter, and the 6-speed tranny is VW's best yet. Past boxes could ruin momentum with mushy 2-to-3 shifts. My tester was as crisp as the fall air. GTI typically sells 40% manuals; this gen should sell more.

Not that the 7-speed dual-clutch automatic is any slouch. With a flick of the wrist, I slotted it into DRIVE, firing off lightning-quick up-and-downshifts with steering-mounted paddles.

But analog manual better fits GTI's personality. If it's automatic you want, let me introduce you to GTI's big brother Golf R — R as in Rocket.

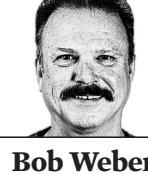
Get it if you can afford it, but your grin will be no wider than in the GTI. That's because both share an electronics architecture that includes (standard on the GTI) goodies like adaptive cruise control that is as good a highway semi-autonomous system as I have found this side of Tesla's Autopilot and GM's Super-Cruise.

Throttle wide-open over a high-speed crest on Route 209, the eighth-Gen Golf GTI felt as fresh as my first Mark I 40 years ago. Bar reset.

**Q: I too love your**

**A: Doctors charge for examinations and diagnoses, electricians and plumbers charge for showing up at your door. Most professional auto service shops charge a diagnostic fee. They have to pay the technician for his or her time. The diagnostic fee is generally rolled into the repair if you decide to have the work done.**

## Fixing a faulty warning light



**Bob Weber**  
Motormouth

**Q: I own a 2000 Honda Accord. It constantly shows the red brake light on the dash. Previously, the light would appear only intermittently. I had the brakes checked out two different times and everything is in good condition. How can I correct this? — T.M., Sugar Grove, Illinois**

**A:** Your car has a brake lamp warning system. Should a lamp burn out, a warning is triggered. Sometimes the lamp may check out fine and even illuminate, but a weak ground or dirty contacts will cause a change in the sensed voltage on the circuit similar to a burned out lamp. Sometimes, the problem is intermittent and hard to pin down.

**Q: A few months ago, I brought my Nissan in for service and I asked them to check on a problem I was having with the hatchback. They said they would have to charge me a \$160 diagnostic fee. Is the diagnostic fee a new charge every dealer service is charging? Does the diagnostic fee go toward the cost of any repair that might be needed or is it just an extra charge?**

**S.K., Rancho Mirage, California**

**A:** Doctors charge for examinations and diagnoses, electricians and plumbers charge for showing up at your door. Most professional auto service shops charge a diagnostic fee. They have to pay the technician for his or her time. The diagnostic fee is generally rolled into the repair if you decide to have the work done.

Should a lamp burn out, a warning is triggered. DREAMSTIME

**comments about oil**

**change intervals. I drive a 2014 Prius and put on only about 6,000 miles a year. My manual says I only need to change the oil every year or 10,000 miles. However, after changing my oil religiously every 3,000 miles or 3 months most of my life, it makes me feel very uncomfortable to go that long between changes.**

**M.** Your car has lane keeping assist. Cameras see the lane lines on the road and, if you drift too far to either side, a warning is issued. On some vehicles, the steering wheel will gently tug to let you know you are drifting wide. The system doesn't work if there are no lane lines or if weather — such as snow — obscures the lines. One more thing: If you travel in a straight line for a long time, the warning will activate. You may choose to turn the system off. Check your owner's manual for how to do it.

**— S.D., Glenview, Illinois**

**A:** To get an analysis of motor oil, you have to send it away to a lab. It is not terribly expensive, just inconvenient. Plus, your Prius engine doesn't do as much work as a non-hybrid car's engine. Back in the olden days, 3,000-mile oil changes were necessary because the oil suffered from gasoline contamination and other stuff. Today's oils are far superior to the former ones and engine tolerances are much tighter. You are doing the right thing by routinely checking the oil level.

**Q: I have two 2020**

**Hyundai Tucson. Periodically, while driving,**

**I hear a chime and a message appears on the**

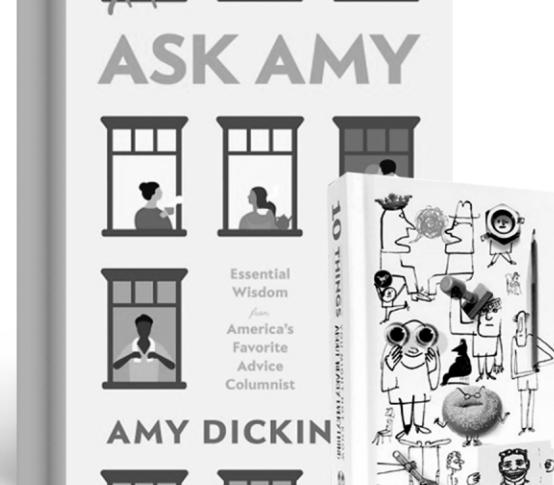
**dashboard. The message only lasts for a few seconds. I haven't been able to make out what it says, maybe, "keep hands on the wheel."** Dealer has no idea what it says. Apparently, it isn't an important warning, but it is a real puzzler. Any ideas? — D.D., Oviedo, Florida

**A:** Your car has lane keeping assist. Cameras see the lane lines on the road and, if you drift too far to either side, a warning is issued. On some vehicles, the steering wheel will gently tug to let you know you are drifting wide. The system doesn't work if there are no lane lines or if weather — such as snow — obscures the lines. One more thing: If you travel in a straight line for a long time, the warning will activate. You may choose to turn the system off. Check your owner's manual for how to do it.

**Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth. tribune@gmail.com.**

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This roasted squash dish is so easy to put together, you may find yourself making it repeatedly for friends and family. DIANE ROSEN WORTHINGTON/TNS

## SERIOUSLY SIMPLE

# Roasted delicata squash is great addition to your table

**By Diane Rossen Worthington**  
Tribune Content Agency

When I look in the squash stall at the market and eye delicata squash I get excited. Here's a seasonal vegetable that has so many delicious elements to it. I love its colorful exterior, with green and yellow stripes, its rich creamy, almost buttery interior, and being able to eat the delicate, edible skin.

The prep for this dish takes a bit of time with slicing it into eights and removing the seeds. But you don't have to peel it. Make sure you use a heavy knife to easily cut through the squash.

To roast, I use a nonstick half sheet that has been oiled and lined with parchment

paper. Each squash piece is oiled on all sides which helps to brown the squash. The sweetness of the squash is complemented by the finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves that offer a pine, sage-like flavor. Rosemary can be added to food as it cooks because its flavor is not lost as it cooks.

This dish can be the star of the show for vegetarians or a tasty side to an assortment of dishes. I like to serve this as a side dish to chicken, Cornish hens, turkey or pork. I also like to serve it at room temperature on top of arugula or a spring mix. A simple vinaigrette dresses the greens.

No matter how you serve this, you'll love the fresh, clean flavors of this dish.

lengthwise to get 8 pieces for each squash. (You will have a total of 16 pieces.)

**2. Line** a sheet pan with parchment paper and then oil the paper. Drizzle the oil over the pieces and brush pieces so all sides are coated. Season the inside flesh with salt and pepper and chopped rosemary. Lay squash pieces flesh-side down on the baking sheet.

**3. Bake** for about 18 minutes on one side and then turn over and continue roasting for another 18 to 20 minutes or until golden brown and crispy.

**4. Transfer** the squash to a serving platter with a wide spatula and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sprinkle crumbled goat cheese over the squash. Then sprinkle lemon zest on top. Garnish with rosemary leaves. Serve warm or at room temperature.

# Pizza-inspired sausage bread stuffed with cheesy goodness

**By Renae Wilson**  
TheKitchn.com

It's hard to go wrong when it comes to filling bread with delicious meats.

Sausage bread is essentially ground sausage rolled inside bread dough before being baked. This recipe calls for fresh pizza dough, which can be easily found in the refrigerated or frozen section of your local grocery.

I used a mix of ground hot and sweet Italian sausage and added some ground mushrooms. But it's an extremely versatile loaf. You could spoon ½ cup marinara or pizza sauce into the roll, omit the mushrooms altogether, and add pepperoni or chopped peppers, or replace the mozzarella with provolone.



This hearty, homemade bread is made with ground sausage rolled in pizza dough. MELEYNA NOMURA/THEKITCHN.COM

## Sausage bread

**Makes:** 8 servings

1 pound pizza dough

1 small shallot

4 ounces baby bella or cremini mushrooms

2 cloves garlic

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided

2 teaspoons Italian seasoning

1 to 2 teaspoons red-pepper flakes

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 pound uncooked sweet or spicy Italian sausage, casings removed if needed

All-purpose flour, for stretching out the dough

2 cups shredded Italian cheese blend (4 ounces)

1 large egg

1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Marinara sauce, for serving

**1. If pizza dough** is refrigerated, let it sit on the counter until it comes to room temperature, about 2 hours.

**2. Arrange** a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 425 degrees.

**3. Finely chop** 1 small shallot (¼ cup), 4 ounces baby bella mushrooms and 2 garlic cloves. Beat 1 large egg in a small bowl.

**4. Heat** 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shallots, mushrooms and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until the shallots are translucent and the mushrooms are lightly browned, 5 to 8 minutes.

**5. Reduce** heat to medium-low. Add

2 teaspoons Italian seasoning, 1 to 2 teaspoons red-pepper flakes (depending on spice preference), 1 teaspoon kosher salt and 1 teaspoon black pepper. Cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes more. Transfer to large bowl.

**6. Return** the skillet to medium-high heat and heat the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in the pan until shimmering. Add 1 pound Italian sausage and cook, breaking up the meat into small pieces and stirring occasionally, until browned and cooked through, 7 to 8 minutes. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate, then add to the mushroom mixture and stir to combine.

**7. Dust** a large sheet of parchment paper with all-purpose flour, then place the pizza dough on top. Stretch and roll the dough out to a 12-by-9-inch rectangle about ¼-inch thick. Don't roll the dough out too thin or the filling will spill out once rolled. It's OK if the dough doesn't form a perfect rectangle — having an even thickness is more important.

**8. Spread** the meat mixture on top, leaving a ½-inch border, then sprinkle with 2 cups shredded Italian cheese blend. Starting from a shorter end, roll the dough up tightly. Tuck the ends underneath and position seam-side down.

**9. Transfer** parchment paper with rolled-up dough onto baking sheet. Cut 4 (2-inch) slits into the top of the dough. Brush the dough with the egg, then sprinkle with 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese if desired.

**10. Bake** until the bread is golden brown and cooked through, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes before slicing. Serve with marinara sauce for dipping.



This savory Dutch baby is topped with roasted mushrooms, bacon and shredded cheddar cheese. GRETCHEN MCKAY/PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE PHOTOS

## Embrace the cast-iron skillet

3 recipes that are perfect for the kitchen workhorse

By Gretchen McKay  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

**N**onstick pans are a godsend for frying eggs and flipping pancakes, and an enameled Dutch oven will never disappoint while cooking soups, stews and sauces. But when it comes to the workhorse of kitchen equipment, nothing beats a well-seasoned cast-iron pan.

Not only is cast-iron cookware relatively inexpensive, it's incredibly versatile. You might think grandma used it just for frying chicken or making cornbread, but you also can roast a chicken or sear a steak in a cast-iron pan, use one to make the fluffiest pancakes, bake a deep-dish pizza or even panfry a piece of fish.

Properly seasoned, cast-iron pans boast a silky, shiny surface that's naturally nonstick, eliminating the need for added fats. It also retains even, constant heat if the pan has been preheated over medium-high heat on the stove-top or in a 500-degree oven.

Not sold? The cookware also can go directly from the stovetop or oven to the table, and if you take care of it properly, cast-iron lasts for generations, earning it points for sustainability.

### Pan-seared sausage with apples

**Makes:** 4 servings  
**Note:** The choice of apple is key. You need to use a firm variety, such as Pink Lady or Gala, that will hold up to heat well. (Red and Golden Delicious will get mushy.)  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
4 tart apples, each cored and cut into 8 slices  
½ small red cabbage, shredded  
4 sweet Italian sausages (about 1½ pounds)  
¼ cup dry white wine  
2 tablespoons white wine or Champagne vinegar  
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper  
**1.** Heat oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add apples, cut-side down, turning occasionally, until apples are golden brown, 5–8 minutes. Add cabbage and continue to cook until cabbage is wilted, about 4 to 5 minutes.  
**2.** Prick sausages with a fork, then add to skillet. Cook, turning occasionally, until sausage is browned and cooked through, 10–12 minutes.  
**3.** Add wine and vinegar to skillet. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until sauce is thick enough



to coat a spoon, 4 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.  
**4.** Spoon over with pan juices and

serve with some crusty bread for sopping up sauce.  
— Adapted from *bonappetit.com*

### Roasted mushroom and bacon Dutch baby

**Makes:** 4–6 servings  
1 pound mixed mushrooms (such as cremini, button or shiitake), sliced  
4 slices bacon, sliced  
3 large eggs  
1 clove garlic, chopped  
¾ cup whole milk  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, divided  
½ cup all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled  
2 tablespoons cornstarch  
Kosher salt  
1 tablespoon fresh thyme  
2 ounces cheddar cheese, grated (about ½ cup)  
1 scallion, thinly sliced  
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley

**1.** Set oven racks in middle and upper positions. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place mushrooms and bacon on a rimmed baking sheet. Place on top rack in oven while preheating and roast, stirring once, until mushrooms are golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Place a 10-inch cast-iron skillet on middle rack and heat 15 minutes.

**2.** Place eggs and garlic in a blender. Process on high until frothy, 45 seconds. With blender running, gradually add milk and 2 tablespoons butter; stop blender. Add flour, cornstarch and ¼ teaspoon salt; process 1 minute. Fold in thyme.

**3.** Carefully add remaining tablespoon butter to heated skillet and swirl to coat. Immediately add batter. Bake until golden brown and puffed, 14 to 16 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese and bake until melted, 3 to 5 minutes. Top with mushroom mixture, scallions and parsley.

— From *countryliving.com*

### Skillet sweet potato hash

**Makes:** 1 serving  
Olive oil, for pan  
1 medium sweet potato, peeled and shredded (about 2 cups)  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Butter for pan  
2 eggs

2 thick slices smoked ham  
Chopped parsley, for garnish  
**1.** Heat a medium cast-iron pan over medium heat and add 1 tablespoon or two of olive oil, swirling to coat the pan. Once sizzling, add shredded sweet potato in a single layer, season generously with salt and pepper and cook, turning every so often with a spatula, until the potatoes are soft and nicely browned, and you can't make out the individual shreds. Cover and keep warm while you prepare the eggs.

**2.** Heat another pan over medium heat, then add 1 tablespoon or so of butter. Reduce heat to low, then break 2 eggs into pan. Cover with a lid, and cook until egg white is set, around 3 minutes.

**3.** While eggs are cooking, heat a flat skillet over medium heat, then add 2 slices of ham. Pan fry until brown and crispy, about 2–3 minutes per side.

**4.** Spoon sweet potatoes onto a plate, then top with fried eggs. Place ham beside hash and drizzle Sriracha sauce over top. Garnish with chopped parsley, and serve immediately.

## Warm salad comes together in minutes

By Gretchen McKay  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

I've been married for a gazillion years, but I still like to occasionally woo my husband with a great meal. Which is not to say I spend hours preparing a meal that reminds the guy how much I love him, because oftentimes the best dinner is the one that the cook can pull together without much effort.

This date-night salad is a great example of a dish any home cook can whip up in a flash using everyday ingredients.

It pairs crispy panko fried-chicken tenders with the contrasting but complementary flavors of fresh orange, salty blue cheese-stuffed olives and the rich caramel taste of dried dates. It's presented on a bed of peppery arugula and tender baby spinach.

But the real star is the warm mustard dressing, which gets a zesty, citrusy kick from apple cider vinegar and orange juice concentrate.

I garnished the salad with crumbled goat cheese and toasted almonds. Paired with some crusty bread and a glass of crisp rosé, it was a perfect meal for two. And it only took about 15 minutes.



This warm arugula salad delivers a satisfying mix of pan-fried chicken tenders, fresh oranges, olives and goat cheese in a warm citrus dressing, with a toasted almond garnish for crunch.

GRETCHEN MCKAY/PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

### Warm arugula salad with chicken and chevre

**Makes:** 2 servings

#### For the salad:

6 cups arugula and/or baby spinach, or mix of both

6 large blue cheese-stuffed or regular pitted green olives, halved or quartered

4 large dried dates, quartered or diced

1 navel orange, peeled, sectioned and cut into chunks

#### For the chicken:

1 cup panko bread crumbs

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes

½ teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon dried basil

¼ teaspoon dried thyme

¼ teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed

½ cup flour

1 egg beaten with 2 tablespoons water

½ pound boneless chicken tenders, or 1 large boneless chicken breast cut into thin strips

#### Olive oil, for frying

#### For the dressing:

4 tablespoons frozen orange juice concentrate

2 tablespoons water

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

½ cup crumbled goat cheese

¼ cup toasted slivered almonds, for garnish

**1.** Place arugula and/or

spinach, olives, dates and orange chunks in a large salad bowl. Set aside.

**2.** In a medium bowl, stir together panko bread crumbs and dried spices until evenly mixed, then place on a large plate. Place flour on another plate. In large bowl, beat egg with 2 tablespoons water.

**3.** Dredge chicken in the flour, coating well. Shake off excess flour and dip in the egg, then roll chicken in the panko crumbs to coat. Set the chicken to the side to rest for about 5 minutes. (This helps the coating stick better.)

**4.** Place 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large nonstick skillet, and heat over medium-high heat. When it sizzles, add the chicken and cook until golden and just cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm.

**5.** Add orange juice concentrate, water and vinegar to pan. Stir in mustard and let dressing boil for about 30 seconds. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add ½ of the dressing to the salad and toss gently to mix.

**6.** Divide salad between 2 plates. Top salads with fried chicken and goat cheese, and drizzle on remaining dressing. Garnish with toasted almonds and serve.

— Adapted from "Eating Well Serves Two" by Jim Romanoff

# This heavenly biscuit recipe requires just 2 ingredients

**By Ligaya Figueras**  
The New York Times

Biscuits are one of my guilty pleasures. I simply cannot pass up one of these heavenly, flaky, buttery rounds.

Not sure about you, but I've got a biscuit ritual: Snag one hot from the oven. Slice the already bursting seam with a knife. Add a pat of good butter to each half and watch it melt. Do you know how hard it is not to sneak a bite as you watch the butter stain the bread yellow? Dab on fruit preserves, decidedly choosing from among the gifted jars of the homemade variety, ones that friends felt I was worthy

enough to receive.

I've gotten ahold of a keeper of a biscuit recipe. It calls for just two ingredients: White Lily self-rising flour and heavy cream. It's called Jolene Black's cream biscuits.

Originally published in the Times-Picayune in April 2005, it is a reader recipe. It has since been reprinted in "Cooking Up a Storm – 10th Anniversary: Recipes Lost and Found From the Times-Picayune of New Orleans."

As the Times-Picayune editors note, success comes from sticking with these two ingredients. "The trick is to use these exact ingredients. The biscuits won't be as light if you use any

other kind of self-rising flour. The fat in the heavy cream replaces the shortening or butter in comparable recipes."

The first time I made these biscuits, I probably should have recorded my oohs and aahs at the divine smell, the sky-high rise of the bread, and the brevity of the baking project – it's not a project; start to finish, making these biscuits is faster than washing dishes by hand. I marveled at the perfection of the liquid-to-dry ratio. And that we don't even need to add salt.

An apple a day might keep the doctor away. A cream biscuit a day surely is a recipe for tasting heaven on earth.



The recipe for Jolene Black's cream biscuits requires only White Lily self-rising flour and heavy cream. LIGAYA FIGUERAS/ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION FILE

## Jolene Black's cream biscuits

**Makes:** 10-12 biscuits  
2½ cups White Lily self-rising flour  
1½ cups heavy cream

**1. Preheat** the oven to 450 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet.  
**2. Put** the flour in a medium mixing bowl and add the cream. Stir until a soft, sticky ball forms. (The dough will seem wet at first.) On a very lightly floured surface, knead lightly with your well-floured hands about 3 times, just until the dough comes together.  
**3. Pat** the dough to about ½-inch thickness. Cut out biscuits with a 2 ½-inch round cutter. Bake on the prepared baking sheet for 10 to 12 minutes, until the biscuits are golden brown.



Homemade M&M cookies are easy to make. ASHLEY MOORE/AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

# Candy-filled cookies are absolutely irresistible

America's Test Kitchen

If you have an abundance of M&M's, put them to good use by making homemade cookies with the kids. You can also teach them about the candy while you bake.

The Ms printed on M&M's stand for

the last names of their inventors: Forrest Mars and Bruce Murrie. These two businessmen teamed up to make M&M's in 1941 and started by selling their candy exclusively to the U.S. armed services (the candy-coated shells made M&M's heat resistant and good for travel).

## M&M cookies

**Makes:** 12 cookies  
1 cup (5 ounces) all-purpose flour  
¼ teaspoon baking soda  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¾ cup (5 ¼ ounces) sugar  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted  
1 large egg  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
½ cup M&M's

**1. Adjust** the oven rack to the middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

**2. In a medium bowl**, whisk together flour, baking soda and salt.

**3. In a large bowl**, whisk sugar and melted butter until smooth. Add egg and vanilla, and whisk until well combined.

**4. Add** the flour mixture and use a rubber spatula to stir until no dry flour is visible and a soft dough forms.

**5. Roll** the dough into 12 balls (about 1 heaping tablespoon each). Place the dough balls on the parchment-lined baking sheet, leaving space between them.

**6. Gently flatten** each dough ball. Press candies into each cookie (about 5 candies per cookie).

**7. Bake** until the edges of the cookies are just set and the centers are still soft, 11 to 13 minutes. Let cookies cool completely on the baking sheet, about 30 minutes.

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Prolific cookbook author Claudia Roden at her London home Oct. 26. Roden, 85, has helped revolutionize the way the British cook and eat. LAUREN FLEISHMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES PHOTOS

# A WORLD OF RECIPES

**Over legendary 50-year career, Claudia Roden has transformed her travels into cookbooks**

**By Melissa Clark**

The New York Times

LONDON — If you've ever swiped a supple piece of pita bread through a plate of garlicky hummus and your family roots aren't in the Middle East, you may have Claudia Roden to thank.

In 1968, in the modestly titled "A Book of Middle Eastern Food," the 32-year-old Egyptian exile gave the non-Arabic-speaking world one of its first detailed looks at this rich cuisine. Through hundreds of traditional, comprehensive and carefully tested recipes, like herb-flecked Lebanese tabbouleh and Syrian lamb kibbe, she introduced western home cooks to the subtle, extensive art of Middle Eastern cooking.

Before her book, she could find no volume of recipes like this published in English or in any European language. If you wanted to make baba ghanoush, you might persuade a Turkish or Egyptian cook to share family secrets passed down through generations. But let's face it: Before 1968, if you were living in Britain, chances were good you'd never tasted baba ghanoush.

Over the course of her 50-year career, Roden, 85, has helped revolutionize the way the British cook and eat. She taught them how to blend cucumbers with yogurt and garlic into a creamy salad, how to simmer lentils with cumin to make a warming soup, and how to fold phyllo stuffed with cheese and herbs into flaky bite-size pastries.

As if that wasn't legacy enough, she also helped shift the way writing about cuisine, particularly by women, was perceived.

Paul Levy, chairman emeritus of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, of which Roden was a founding member, said her scholarship on food was part of a growing cultural trend.

Along with culinary writers like Elizabeth David, Jane Grigson, Sri Owen and even Julia Child, he said, she deepened the conversation around food to address questions of culture, context, history and identity.

Her dozen cookbooks, particularly "The Book of Jewish Food," produced a genre of works that is at once literary and deeply researched while still being, at heart, practical manuals on how to make delicious meals.

When Roden started writing "A Book of Middle Eastern Food," David had already published a handful of Middle Eastern recipes — notably, hummus bi tahina — in her far-ranging "A Book of Mediterranean Food" in 1950. But it was Roden's work that took on the entire cuisine of the Middle East in depth, in ways both scholarly and highly personal.

Yotam Ottolenghi, the chef, cookbook author and New York



One of Roden's paintings, center, and, at bottom left, a photo of her parents, Nelly and Cesar Douek, at her London home. During the Suez crisis in 1956, when the president of Egypt expelled Jews from the country, Roden's family came to London, where she went on to become an accomplished painter.

Times food columnist credits Roden with laying the foundation for chefs like him.

"A Book of Middle Eastern Food" has been around for so long, it feels like prehistory," he said. "It was really revelatory for its time."

Although it's hard to imagine, in the midst of Britain's current love affair with Middle Eastern flavors, the cuisine was considered outlandish and unappealing in the 1960s. Roden's book was all but ignored when it came out.

"At that moment, no one was interested in the food of the enemy culture," said Roden, who identifies as a Sephardi/Mizrahi Jew (Mizrahi is the Israeli term for Jews from the Middle East and North Africa). "When the book came out, people would always ask me if all the recipes were for testicles and eyeballs."

Roden recounted this in late summer as we sat in her flower-bordered North London garden, savoring bullinada, an aioli-spiked fish stew, a recipe from her latest cookbook (published in the United States on Nov. 9), "Claudia Roden's Mediterranean: Treasured Recipes From a Lifetime of Travel" (Ten Speed Press, 2021).

At the border of the lawn stood a hedge of scarlet-blossomed

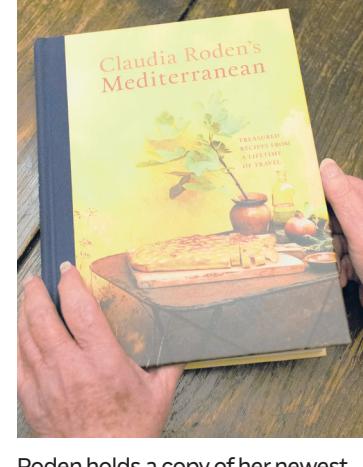
fuchsia trees reminiscent of the florescent bougainvillea on her family's terrace in Cairo, where she lived until she was 15. That's when she left for boarding school in Paris — and didn't return until a quarter-century later. By that time, her family had long been expelled from Egypt, and her childhood home was gone.

## Memories of Cairo

Claudia Douek was born in 1936 to a large, prominent Syrian Jewish family that had emigrated to Cairo in the 19th century. This was when the Egyptian capital supplanted Aleppo as the region's mercantile center after the opening of the Suez Canal.

Cairo had a diverse, polyglot culture. Roden's first language was French (as it was for all cosmopolitan Jews in Cairo), followed by Italian (the language of her beloved nanny), English and Arabic. Her maternal grandmother, who could trace her ancestry back to pre-Inquisition Spain, spoke Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), which Roden absorbed and which helped her research and write "The Food of Spain," published in 2011.

She lived with her parents, Nelly and Cesar Douek, and two



Roden holds a copy of her newest cookbook, "Claudia Roden's Mediterranean." Her cookbooks are literary and deeply researched but are still, at heart, practical manuals on how to make delicious meals.

brothers in a prosperous circle of extended family, with dozens of cousins, aunts and uncles nearby. They all gathered regularly for opulent feasts scented with rosewater and toasted coriander; every holiday, wedding, birth and even Shabbat dinner was celebrated on a grand scale.

In 1956, during the Suez crisis, the president of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, expelled the Jews from the country. Leaving all its possessions behind, the Douek family made its way to London, where Roden attended St. Martin's School of Art and went on to become an accomplished painter.

Nelly Douek's kitchen became a gathering place for fellow exiles. They sought succor in stuffed vine leaves and honeyed pastries, and companionship in the memories they all shared.

Although most of the cooking in Roden's childhood home was done by servants, Nelly Douek and her friends chopped herbs, kneaded doughs, stuffed vegetables and rolled confections in London, laughing and reminiscing over cups of syrupy coffee.

Throughout the Middle East at that time, a family's heirloom recipes were among its most closely guarded secrets. The indiscreet sharing of a recipe would have been nearly as bad as negotiating an unfortunate marriage for one of the children.

In exile, things were different. The exchange of recipes became a currency, a way of communicating and expressing love. And women were freer to choose their husbands. (Roden married Paul Roden when she was 22; the couple had three children before separating in 1974.)

In her mother's busy kitchen, Roden heard the women ask the same question — "Do you have any recipes?" — every time a cousin or friend would arrive. They shared the secrets to their dishes so that when any one of them prepared that rich orange-almond cake or a mint-sprinkled tahini salad, they would remember one another and feel loved and understood.

Roden took notes, detailing regional pilaf variations and each cook's method of layering onions, tomatoes and pita bread into fattoush.

"We all felt a very strong need to collect, to record," Roden said, adding that it was all part of preserving culture and identity.

"If we don't collect it," she said, "it will disappear."

She amassed more than 1,000 recipes and stories this way. These became the cornerstone not only for "A Book of Middle Eastern Food" but also for "The Book of Jewish Food," since most of the families who passed through the Doueks' home were from the Sephardic Jewish diaspora. In addition, she spent 10 years researching recipes and customs from other parts of the Arab world.

She worked on those two canonical books for a combined total of 25 years. But she wasn't done. When her children grew up and left home, she left, too, traveling across the world to research her books "The Food of Italy," "The Food of Spain" and "Arabesque: A Taste of Morocco, Turkey, & Lebanon."

On these trips, she delighted in talking to anyone about food and culture: people on trains and buses, waiters in cafes and maids in hotels. She'd ask them what they liked to eat and if they had any recipes. Traveling alone, Roden had a knack for getting herself invited by strangers to try a local specialty, like the octopus-and-potato salad from the Greek island of Skopelos in her most recent cookbook.

"As I was walking by a family eating on their terrace, they invited me in to share their octopus salad and a bottle of wine," she wrote. "It was heaven."

## Scholar and an artist

Of all her books, "Claudia Roden's Mediterranean" is the most poetic, the most lyrical (with photos by Susan Bell) and perhaps the one that most unites all of her many facets.

Containing 100 recipes and spare but warm prose, it has an intimacy that shows these are the dishes she'd cook if you came to her house, gathered from her life-long travels. But instead of striving to faithfully record someone's recipe, as she does in other books, she has taken the creative license to tweak them to suit herself.

There's an emphasis on vegetables and grains, and in many cases, simplified, streamlined techniques (and even an occasional one-pot meal).

Food writer Nigella Lawson, a friend of Roden since Lawson was 19, calls this book a distillation of Roden's joyful, generous spirit.

Reading it is like talking with her in her garden, Lawson said.

"All of a sudden, there are all these exquisite little plates in front of you, and she's telling you to dip something in olive oil. And you have this sense of what it would be like at her house in Cairo, sitting on her terrace, watching the sunset."

Which is, of course, exactly what Roden has set out to do.

"Writing this book was a way of bringing back my past," Roden said as the light cast a warm glow over her garden, "and enjoying all of my memories."